THE PROPHETS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

By

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THE PROPHETS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
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To
MY WIFE

PREFACE

PERHAPS the most conspicuous gain of recent study of the Old Testament has been the re-discovery of the prophets. For centuries these were but honoured names, the bearers of certain golden words that shone out lustrous over the ages, while their own personalities remained in shadow. Now the prophets stand in the clear light of history, as the great figures of the ancient Revelation, the men through whose word and influence the vision broadened towards the perfect day. But they are no mere historical figures. As poets, preachers, moralists, statesmen, seers and reformers—heralds of the coming Kingdom—above all, as men of God, who knew His mind, and walked with Him in spirit and truth, they are abiding fountains of inspiration for those who seek after righteousness.

Individual prophets have received brilliant exposition at the hands of English-speaking scholars. There is still room, however, for a comprehensive treatment of the subject, which allows the prophets to speak for themselves. The present volume seeks to fulfil this ideal, within necessary limits. The

course of prophecy is traced from its first morning beams, till the light disappears in the rosy flush of Apocalypse; the prophets are set on the background of their time, and portrayed in their sharply contrasted personality and experience; but the stress throughout is laid on translations of their most significant utterances, which reproduce as nearly as possible the sense and rhythm of the original. The volume is thus, in subject-matter and method of treatment alike, the complement of my previous work on *The Poets of the Old Testament*, to which the reader is referred for a statement of general principles.

As before, I have taken Kittel's standard *Biblia Hebraica* as a textual basis, and introduced critical foot-notes only when I have followed an independent course. My main obligations to other workers in the field are acknowledged in the body of the book. I take this opportunity, however, of expressing my deep gratitude to my brother-in-law, Mr. James Georgeson, M.A., Aberdeen, who has again helped me with the proof-sheets, and offered many valuable suggestions, from a literary point of view.

MONTREAL, 1916.

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22, line 1. *Read* 22 *for* 2.
24, line 6. *Read* 853 *for* 854.
42, line 8. *Read* the capital *for* the counted.
note 1, line 5. *Read* III *for* IV.
62, line 8 from foot. *Read* V *for* IV.
107, line 1. *Read* thirty *for* forty.
115, line 8. *Read* bare *for* off.
120, line 5. *Read* Tartan *for* Tartar.
128, note 2, line 2. *Read* glosses *for* losses.
148, note 2, line 3. *Read* added *for* dded.
150, lines 9 f. *Read* of *for* from, *and* from *for* with.
166, lines 9 and 15. *Read* 669 *for* 668.
line 19. *Read* Upper Egypt *for* the Delta.
last line. *Read* -ilani *for* -ili.
167, line 1. *Read* 612 *for* 607.
line 4. *Read* 621-20 *for* 612-11.
lines 10 ff. *Read* Allying himself with Nabopolassar and the Scythians, Cyaxares resumed the assault. Nineveh offered *for* That danger laid . . . offered.
line 13. *Read* in July or August 612 *for* about the year 607.
168, line 12. *Read* 615 *for* 610.
note 2, line 4. *Read* 612 *for* 607.
176, line 4. *Read* suffusing *for* infusing.
line 8. *Read* in *for* n.
187, lines 15 f. *Read* Cyaxares, as we have seen, in the year 612 B.C. Seven years *for* Cyaxares . . . Three years.
196. Insert at foot of page: 1) On the critical questions connected with this prophecy, cf. the Commentaries, *sub loco*.
215, line 16. *Read* is *for* s.
222, note 1, last line. *Read* xi. 1-21 *for* xii. 1-12.
252, line 5. *Read* Northern *for* Southern.
line 7. *Read* 553 *for* 549.
line 18. *Read* startling *for* amazing.
276, lines 22 and 24. *Read* Tishri *for* Tammuz.
lines 23 and 26. *Read* October *for* July, *and* November *for* October.
301, note. *Read* 538 *for* 638, *and* 520 *for* 620.
318, line 19. *Read* the *for* het.
330, lines 13 and 15. *Read* him *for* Him.
340, last line. *Read* Darius' *for* Cyrus'.
341, lines 2 and 21. *Read* Cyrus *for* Darius.
Add note: Historically, of course, Cyrus preceded Darius.
354, last line. *Read* Hoshea *for* Hosea.
357, lines 8 and 28. *Read* III *for* IV.
line 22. *Read* V *for* IV.

CHAPTER I

The Dawn of Prophecy

THE birth of Israel was the result of a great act of faith. Out of a mass of scattered units, sunk in spiritual lethargy and despondency, the creative genius of Moses called to life a nation strong in the consciousness of a lofty destiny, through common allegiance to Jahweh their living Lord and Leader—an austere God, whose glory was revealed amid the storms and thunders of Sinai, but in whose heart a stern regard for righteousness was already blended with a deep and abiding love for His people. Inspired by this high confidence, Moses was able to guide them through all the trials and temptations of their desert journey, till they reached the borders of the Promised Land.

With the settlement in Canaan new dangers confronted the growing faith. The Conquest was far from complete. Though the wooded hill-country west of the Jordan fell an easy prey to the invading tribesmen, the fertile plains and strong walled cities remained in the hands of the Canaanites. Thus the struggling communities of Israel lay long ex-

posed to attack from their neighbours on every side, and victory often hung in the balance. Had the young nation succumbed to these attacks, the religion of Israel must have shared its downfall. But victory was fraught with almost graver peril. In all the arts of civilized life the vanquished Canaanites stood high above their rivals; and here too 'the conquered led their conquerors captive.' Once the fury of battle was spent, Israel succeeded quietly to the inheritance of the Canaanites, learning of them to build and to plant, to sow and to reap. Excavations in the buried cities of Palestine show no break in civilization as the result of the Conquest. It is clear from Israel's own records that the simple ties of neighbourly commerce were further strengthened by bonds of friendship and alliance. All this reacted powerfully on the development of Jahwism. The religion of the Canaanites was a warm and sensuous Nature-worship, which exercised a peculiar fascination over the passionate Semitic temperament. While Jahweh remained in solitary majesty on the rugged peaks of Sinai, or marched through tempest and earthquake to battle for Israel, the Baalim or 'Lords' of Canaanite devotion lived on the happiest terms of intimacy with their people, giving them in season 'their bread and their water, their wool and their flax, their oil and their drink' (Hos. ii. 5), and filling the round of their lives with gladness.

Through its association with the cult of Ashtart, the Semitic goddess of love and fertility, Baalism allowed free play likewise to the most voluptuous emotions, and the wildest licence and lust. Many of the sons and daughters of Israel yielded to the spell, and whored away from Jahweh 'on the tops of the mountains and the hills, under oaks and poplars and terebinths,' the shadow of which was good (iv. 13). Even when the form of the old faith was preserved, it was in large measure transfused by the spirit of Baalism. As Jahweh entered into possession of His new home in Canaan, the high places of Baal-worship passed over to His service. The realms of Nature and life over which the Baalim had ruled—the mountains and hills and forests, the running streams and wells, the cornfields and vineyards—were also assigned to Him. Former memories survived, however, and the worship of the high places continued to be defiled by nameless pollutions. Jahweh Himself came to be regarded as the new Baal of Palestine, representative Israelites like Saul, Jonathan and David even calling their sons by the name of Baal. The once virile faith thus seemed about to be submerged in the surrounding tide of heathenism, leaving no wrack of its former strength behind it.

From both these dangers Israel was saved mainly through the influence of the prophets, who not merely held aloft the banner of Jahweh in the face

of every perverse tendency, but in so doing carried His cause to universal triumph.

The first clear instance of prophetic inspiration is found in Deborah, who roused the people of Jahweh to the great battle for independence 'by the waters of Megiddo.' In her case prophecy is self-forgetful enthusiasm for Jahweh expressing itself in warlike passions—a holy hatred against His enemies that could not be sated till all of them had perished like the arch-foe Sisera, celebrated in a Song of glowing exultation, in which is crystallized the fiery patriotism of the age (Judg. v.).[1] But the typical prophets of this early period appear in the bands of religious ecstatics who cross the stage during the stress of the Philistine peril, lashing up their frenzy by the help of music and dance, pouring forth excited sounds, and by the sheer force of spiritual contagion drawing within the circle of their influence a man so sane and prosperous as Saul (1 Sam. x. 5 ff.), and in later crises of history sweep through the land on Jahweh's errands,

[1] The origin of the word *nābhi'* is wrapped in obscurity. Emphasizing the ecstatic element in prophecy, Kuenen derives it from נָבַע, *bubble over*, while H. P. Smith suggests a connexion with the Arabic *naba*, 'to mutter,' and J. A. Bewer compares the Assyrian *nabú*, 'to tear away (by force).' In itself, however, נָבִיא reads like the active noun from an old Semitic root *naba*, 'to speak, proclaim,' found in Assyrian *nabu*, 'to announce,' and *Nebo*, the interpreter-god. The prophet would thus be the 'spokesman' of the Divine (cf. Greek προφήτης, *the forth-speaker*).

clothed in the hairy mantle and leathern girdle of their caste (2 Kings i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4), and sometimes with the *taw* or Jahweh-mark tattooed upon their forehead or breast (1 Kings xx. 41; Zech. xiii. 6), their whole appearance and behaviour conveying to more sober minds the impression of madness (2 Kings ix. 11).[1]

On the surface there is nothing to distinguish these frenzied ecstatic bands from the prophets of Baal or the modern dervishes of Islam. They were all alike inspired by enthusiastic devotion to their God and zeal for His service. The vital difference lies in the character of the gods. The Baalim of Canaan had no moral power to raise their devotees above the degradations of Nature-worship. Islam shows almost as little capacity for spiritual growth. On the other hand, the personality of Israel's God was charged with infinite moral possibilities. From the first, too, the enthusiasm of the prophets was tempered by a strong dash of sound

[1] From the sudden appearance of the *nebhi'im* at the time of the Philistine invasion, Kuenen and other scholars have traced this phenomenon also to Canaanite influence. No doubt Syria and the adjoining regions of Asia Minor were, from the twelfth century B.C. to the days of Apuleius and Lucian, the notorious haunting-ground of religious ecstatics; but prophecy is too universal a phenomenon to be derived from any one local source. Its roots lie in spiritual enthusiasm, and similar manifestations are found, not merely among the mingled races of Asia Minor and the further East, but equally under the impulse of early Christian faith, and in religious revivals generally, down to the present day.

religious wisdom. Like other nations, Israel had its order of 'seers' or visionaries, men of deep insight into the mysteries of life, who in trance, 'eye-sealed,' yet with their inward vision open, 'see the Almighty,' and unfold His purpose to their fellows (Num. xxiv. 15 f.).[1] Often enough these gifts of insight lent themselves, as in Balaam's case, to knavery and greed; but with Samuel the profession of 'seer' underwent a real baptism of the Spirit, and helped to elevate and control the kindred functions of the prophet. Though he might be consulted about such mundane affairs as the whereabouts of lost asses, and was counted not above accepting the seer's usual gift or fee (1 Sam. ix. 7 f.), his keenest powers of vision were concentrated upon the will of Jahweh for His people. The great struggle with the Philistines pointed to the monarchy as the only human means of Israel's salvation. The people were eager to have a king like the nations around them. In the earlier narrative of Saul's accession the seer was in full sympathy with their desire. The king was for him, indeed, the gift of God in answer

[1] The parenthetical note in 1 Sam. ix. 9 implies that the *ro'im* or 'seers' were the spiritual forerunners of the prophets. In reality, the two formed separate orders, the seers being more closely related to priests than to prophets. The functions of the seer did, however, merge in those of the later prophets. Thus we find *ḥozim*, or 'gazers,' like Gad intimately associated with the prophets, while the *ḥazon*, or 'vision' of the gazer, is specifically applied to the spiritual illumination that made one a prophet.

to His people's cry for help (*v.* 16). But on this very account, he saw, the king of Israel must be different from other kings : he must be ' a man after Jahweh's heart,' who sought His honour even more than the national welfare, and only in His strength could hope to deliver Israel from oppression.

With his eyes thus open to the Divine purpose, Samuel was led to anoint Saul as the first ' prince ' over Jahweh's inheritance. The choice seemed ideal. A brave, heroic figure, chivalrous, generous, and modest as he was great, Saul showed himself equally sensitive to religious impressions, and appeared in no wise ashamed of his enthusiasm (1 Sam. x. 9ff.). If only he had kept his heart responsive to the impulse from above, he would assuredly have fulfilled his people's hopes. Unhappily Saul failed in the one thing needful. Whether it were from the disturbing influence of a false personal ambition, or through rooted instability of character, he was unable consistently to seek ' the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.' This was the real cause of his alienation from Samuel. The episode of the sparing of Agag is symptomatic of far broader issues. The two men were, in fact, separated by an ever-widening gulf in principle. To Samuel the interests of Jahweh and His Kingdom were supreme—obedience to His command was ' better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams ' (xv. 22)—while Saul's religious en-

thusiasm evaporated amid the petty accidents of warfare and worldly rule. Hence the tragedy that enveloped his latter years. Called to be king over the chosen people, yet consciously lacking the essential quality of devotion, he could no longer endure the strain of a false position. Growing jealousy of David precipitated the catastrophe ; and the drama closes in darkness and despair.[1]

The contrast is strikingly pointed in Saul's immediate successor. Perhaps no two men have been more misrepresented by superficial judgments. The large and generous manhood of Saul appeals strongly to the natural instinct, while the black stain that tarnished the honour of David may easily blind us to his outstanding virtues. In the eyes of the prophets, David was the ' man after Jahweh's heart.' He alone had the insight into God's purpose, and the resolute force of mind and will, needful for the ruler of His inheritance. His own faith in Jahweh was warm and genuine. With all his failures, too, David sought honestly to subordinate his personal ambitions to the ends of the Kingdom. No sooner had he planted his standard in Zion than he sent to bring the Ark thither ; and he displayed his devotion to Jahweh by dancing like a prophet before Him. At the same time he was moved to show ' the kindness of God ' to the families of such as

[1] Cf. A. B. Davidson's fine study of Saul's Reprobation in *The Called of God*, pp. 143ff.

had shown kindness to him (2 Sam. ix. 1ff.). And though in his dealings with other nations he was a child of his time, and was guilty of deeds of barbarism that shock our modern feeling for humanity, to his own people he was a true friend and father. Thus David stands for all succeeding generations as the ideal ruler of Israel, while his *régime* typified the coming Messianic Kingdom, in which his greater Son should assume the sovereignty, and bring all nations under the sway of the Almighty.

Even at this early period the ethical genius of Old Testament prophecy finds clear expression. Outside the pale of Jahwism the great sin of David would have appeared a mere incident of royalty. An Oriental despot like the king of Damascus, or the late Sultan of Turkey, would have considered it quite within his rights to serve his pleasure thus on any of his subjects; and the jealous husband who resisted the monarch's intrigues would have received even shorter shrift than Uriah. But to the prophet Nathan, judging all things by the standard of Jahweh's righteousness, this was 'evil in God's sight' (2 Sam. xii. 9), which no position of authority in His Kingdom, and no previous devotion to His interests, could in the least condone. The favour Jahweh had meted out to David, indeed, made his sin the darker in God's sight. That which was sin for every conscience in Israel was sin foulest and most base for the man after Jahweh's heart.

This remained a dominant note of prophecy. The God of Israel was a righteous God, whose first demand was for righteous living; and those who had most fully enjoyed His goodness must be themselves the noblest examples of righteousness.

The establishment of the Kingdom laid for centuries one spectre that threatened the struggling faith. The national independence of Israel was now secured, and Jahweh was thereby recognized as one of the mighty gods of the earth. But the old danger of syncretism, or the mingling of cults, arose in a still more acute form. As an important power in the world, the friendship of Israel was courted by neighbouring states, and intermarriages were sought as pledges of mutual interest and alliance. In the royal palace at Jerusalem king Solomon had his harem like other monarchs, with queens and concubines from Egypt and Tyre, Moab and Ammon and Edom (1 Kings xi. 1). The Kingdom of Jahweh was thus invaded by foreign ideals of worship and rule. Though Solomon himself remained loyal to Jahweh, he tolerated the heathen rites introduced by his queens, and actually built them altars to Chemosh, Melech and other gods under the immediate shadow of the Temple (*v.* 7).[1] As ruler,

[1] The familiar paragraph on Solomon's perversion to other gods (1 Kings xi. 1–8) comes to us from a Deuteronomic source, and no doubt reflects the late prophetic judgment on his reign. The summary in *v.* 1, however, depends on first-hand docu-

too, Solomon was deeply influenced by his new environment. His reign saw a rapid advance in the comforts and luxuries of civilization; but this was gained at the cost of the people's liberty. Under Solomon the Kingdom of Jahweh passed into a despotism of the purest Oriental type. The precedent he set was only too faithfully followed by the weak and selfish Rehoboam. When the people besought him to lighten their bondage, 'the king answered them roughly, and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions' (xii. 13f.).

To the prophets this new despotism was as grave an offence in Jahweh's sight as dalliance with other gods. He had called His people to freedom, and He meant them to live in freedom. The king who held them as bond-slaves thereby forfeited his throne. Thus in the very heyday of Solomon's glory the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh, in Jahweh's name and by His authority, rent the Kingdom in twelve, and gave ten parts to Jeroboam, the foreman of the royal buildings (1 Kings xi. 29f.). In the Disruption that ensued, the prophetic party supported Jeroboam as the champion of popular rights, the Jewish prophet Shemaiah even assuring Rehoboam that

ments like 1 Kings iii. 1, while *v.* 7 has all the appearance of an original excerpt from Solomon's Annals.

this thing was of Jahweh (xii. 2ff.). Yet the prophets were by no means blind partisans. For the Northern Kingdom they held up the same high ideals of righteous government as they had urged on David and Solomon; and the defections of the kings they visited with the same stern condemnation. Thus Jeroboam's perversion to Canaanite idolatry in the shape of the golden calves brought down on his head the awesome warnings of 'the man of God from Judah' (xiii. 1ff.), and thereafter the 'heavy tidings' of his former friend and counsellor, Ahijah the Shilonite (xiv. 1ff.). Baasha likewise found a prophetic adversary in Jehu the son of Hanani, charged by Jahweh with the message of doom for himself and his household (xvi. 1ff.).[1] But all these struggles, pregnant as they are with religious significance, pale in interest before the titanic conflict of Ahab and Elijah for Jahweh's moral honour and supremacy.

[1] The stories of prophetic influence in the reigns of Jeroboam and Baasha have likewise been handed down in a Deuteronomic envelope; but here, too, a nucleus of historical fact must underlie the tradition.

CHAPTER II

Elijah and the Conflict with Baal

THE kingdom of Israel had sunk into virtual anarchy when Omri usurped the power. He was a brave and successful soldier, and a strong, capable ruler, who won for 'the house of Omri' an abiding name in Assyrian records. On the Mesha stone, too, he appears as the conqueror of Moab, which had revolted from Israel, probably during the disorders of Rehoboam's feeble reign. The marriage of his son Ahab with Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal king of Tyre,[1] linked his throne in close alliance with the metropolis of the Sidonians; and in Samaria he himself found a capital worthy to rank with Tyre or Jerusalem. Ahab continued his father's success. Till graver matters distracted his attention he ruled Moab with a firm hand. The long-drawn wars with Judah he brought to an honourable end, sealing the treaty of peace by a marriage between his daughter Athaliah and Joram, the heir to

[1] Ethbaal or Ithobal I, of Tyre, a priest of Melcarth, who usurped the sovereignty, and reigned *c.* 887–876 B.C. (cf. Josephus, *Apion*, i. 18). Jezebel's descent from the priesthood of Melcarth may explain in some measure her fanatical devotion to that god.

Jehoshaphat's crown. In a series of gallant encounters with his formidable rival, Benhadad of Damascus, he even succeeded in overturning the balance of power, taking Benhadad himself prisoner, and thereafter standing side by side with him as ally in the great battle of Karkar (854 B.C.), which marks the first movement of Assyrian arms in force against the Westland.

By these military distinctions Ahab seemed destined to revive the glories of the golden age of David and Solomon; but his vaulting ambition over-reached itself and brought about his ruin. His marriage with Jezebel was not actual treason against Israel's God—to the very end of his reign Ahab sought counsel with the prophets of Jahweh, while his children bore the significant names of Ahaziah, Jehoram and Athaliah[1]—but to the syncretist tendencies involved in the marriage he gave freer rein than even Solomon had done. Jezebel was a woman of extraordinary force of character, an Oriental princess of the extreme type, who aimed at winning absolute authority for herself and her own ideals of rule. She was not content, therefore, with mere toleration of her ancient faith; she was determined to secure for her god Melcarth, the 'king of the city' of Tyre, equal recognition with Jahweh. And Ahab was like wax in her powerful

[1] אֲחַזְיָהוּ, *Jahweh helps*; יְהוֹרָם, *Jahweh is exalted*; עֲתַלְיָהוּ, probably also *Jahweh is exalted.*

hands. Not only did he build her a temple of Baal, or Melcarth, with its pillar and Asherah, the pole or tree-trunk consecrated to the dissolute rites of Ashtart (1 Kings xvi. 32f.),[1] but he allowed her also to wreak vengeance on all who opposed her designs. And with such resolution did she carry through her purpose that, while the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal openly 'ate at Jezebel's table' (xviii. 19), the prophets of Jahweh were reduced almost to silence, many of them slain by the edge of the sword, others compelled to hide in caves and holes, and others again corrupted, prating of Peace, peace, when there was no peace (xviii. 4; xix. 10; xxii. 6).

With so uncompromising a champion of Baal-worship on the throne, the recognized spokesmen of Jahweh helpless or servile, and the mass of the people 'limping[2] between two opinions,' hardly able to distinguish between Jahweh and Baal, the faith of Israel was in a perilous plight. Happily one brave man was left to do battle for Jahweh. The very name of Elijah[3] strikes the key-note of

[1] While the cult of Ashtart was widely spread over the East, it was so characteristic of Phœnician religion that the goddess was known as 'the Phœnician Ashtart.' In Phœnicia, too, sacred prostitution had struck unusually deep and strong roots. This intensified the danger to Israel's faith of the threatened alliance with Baal.

[2] פָּסַח, *halt*, or *limp* (on lame, tottering legs).

[3] אֵלִיָּהוּ, *Jahweh is my God.*

his character and service. Whatever others might think or do, Jahweh was his God; and despite the consequences he was prepared to wage war *à outrance* in His sacred cause. Elijah is so colossal a figure that it is impossible for ordinary mortals to do justice to his commanding stature. There is, moreover, much of the whirlwind in his appearance. He comes and goes like the storm, sweeping upon the scene when least expected, and then suddenly vanishing, no one knows whither. His prophetic ministry may, however, be summed up in the two great acts of Carmel and Naboth's vineyard, while the more human side of his character may be approached from the story of his dejection amid the wastes of Horeb.[1]

On Carmel the first great battle was fought against

[1] The main account of Elijah's ministry is contained in 1 Kings xvii.–xix., a splendid piece of historical narrative, clearly from prophetic circles in the North, about the close of the ninth century B.C., and therefore sufficiently near the hero's own age to preserve a faithful impression of his personality. The story of Naboth's vineyard (ch. xxi.) is marked by many of the same literary characteristics, and no doubt belongs to a similar order of narratives. It can hardly be regarded, however, as the sequel to the scene at Horeb, which looks forward to the passing of Elijah (xix. 15ff.). Ewald and other scholars would place the story *before* the ordeal on Carmel, as more directly appealing to the sympathy of the people, and calculated to win them over to Elijah. The present writer feels that a better climax is gained by reading it *after* Carmel. The two great moments in Elijah's ministry are thus set in effective relation, and the picture of his depression in the desert leads fittingly to the choice of a successor to carry on his work.

syncretism. Till now the leaven of Baal had been working subtly, and almost insensibly, in the heart of Israel; and the fusion of disparate elements was accepted as the natural evolution of Jahwism. But under the challenge of the new Melcarth-worship Elijah boldly raised the issue. To him the question was no longer the relative place of Jahweh and other gods—whether Jahweh was stronger than Baal—but the vital principle of faith itself—whether Jahweh or Baal was God. 'How long limp ye between two opinions? If Jahweh be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him' (1 Kings xviii. 21). And the result of the ordeal was decisive for the whole future history of religion. From the moment when Jahweh answered by fire, it became evident to all who had eyes to read the signs of the times, not merely that Jahweh was the God of Israel, but that other gods were vanities. 'When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jahweh, He is God; Jahweh, He is God' (*v.* 39). As against this true and living God the Baal even of mighty Tyre was but a name, unable to help his prophets in the hour of need—a mere shadow of a god, who could not defend his own honour against the rude jests of the adversary.

In the second outstanding moment of Elijah's career the moral character of Jahweh comes into strong relief. The judicial murder of Naboth was typical of the arbitrary deeds of Oriental monarchs

of the age, and would have aroused hardly even comment, still less moral condemnation, in Tyre or any other neighbouring state. In urging her husband to the act of bloodshed, Jezebel was asserting royal prerogatives which her own father would have exercised as matter of course. But to the prophet of Israel—true successor of Nathan and the older heroes of faith—Ahab had 'sold himself to do evil in the sight of Jahweh,' no vain phantom like the Baal he coquetted with, but the righteous God, who hated iniquity, and would inevitably take vengeance on the evil-doer, however exalted in worldly rank. Before the bar of His justice murder was murder, be the guilty one king or commoner; and murder demanded the penalty of death. 'Thus saith Jahweh, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine' (1 Kings xxi. 19).

We have thus reached one of the great landmarks in religious development. The principle of ethical monotheism may not yet have been consciously explicated—and Elijah himself made no attempt to enforce the worship of Israel's God on the widow of Zarephath—but as a practical faith it stands out in unmistakable emphasis. The time when Jahweh's existence must be defended against the enemy is past; the decisive battle with Baal has also been fought and won; and Jahweh emerges from the conflict the one real God in heaven and

earth, supreme in goodness as in power, claiming the undivided allegiance of His people.[1]

It is with a strange feeling of surprise that we pass from these heroic scenes to the wilderness of Horeb, and see Elijah under the broom bush, feebly praying Jahweh to take away his life, for he is no better than his fathers. Yet we are thankful for the sight. It brings the prophet near to us, and shows him to be a man of like passions with ourselves. Even the strongest natures 'faint and be weary'—our Lord Himself had His Gethsemane—and Elijah was but suffering the inevitable reaction from his boldness. The mighty spirit that had confronted king and people in single-handed battle for righteousness was exhausted by the sheer greatness of his deeds. By a true instinct he fled from the haunts of men to the solitude of the desert—Jahweh's ancient home by the tempest-driven heights of Horeb—to find relief in direct communion with Him. And how kindly the Lord his God dealt with the fainting heart! Like a good physician He

[1] To Elijah 'Baal and Jahweh represented, one might say, a contrast of principles of the most vital and profound practical convictions; both could not be right, nor could they exist side by side. For him there were no two Powers, equally worthy of worship, and with equal authority over different spheres, but everywhere One Holy and Mighty Being, who revealed Himself, not in the life of Nature, but in the laws by which alone human society can maintain itself, in the moral demands of the spirit.'—Wellhausen, *Isr. u. Jüd. Geschichte*,[2] p. 74.

touched the core of his malady, and gave him the needed medicine. The cause of his sickness was partly physical exhaustion; and He supplied him with food and rest. But far more disquieting was the unrest of his spirit; and that He calmed by the healing influence of Nature's peace. As he lodged in his cave near Jahweh, 'a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; . . . and after the wind an earthquake; . . . and after the earthquake fire;' but the word of Jahweh came through none of these. As the storm passed, there fell on the prophet's ear 'a sound of gentle stillness' (1 Kings xix. 11f.)—the breath of Nature's tranquillity after the crash of hurricane, earthquake and thunder—and catching in it the accents of Divine sympathy and love, the tumultuous feelings of Elijah found utterance.[1] He had been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, and had spared neither life nor strength in His

[1] The 'still, small voice' is usually taken as the revelation through Elijah of some new and more spiritual aspect of the Divine character, either His patient working out of His purposes, as contrasted with Elijah's tempestuous and fiery zeal (Davidson), or the pure and exalted personality which raises Him beyond the range of a mere Nature-god (Gressmann, Skinner, etc.). To the present writer the theophany appears more personal in its scope—a revelation to the troubled spirit of God's presence in the 'gentleness and peace' of Nature, like that which came to Wordsworth in his hour of moral disillusionment and despair, giving him 'timely utterance,' and restoring his strength and faith and hope (*Prelude*, Books xi. xii.).

service. Yet the only result he could see was utter defeat. 'The children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword: I only am left; and they seek my life, to take it away' (*v.* 14). The situation was, indeed, dark and dangerous; but there was a side to the shield that Elijah's near vision had failed to perceive. Let every worshipper of Baal be cut off from the people, Jahweh would yet leave Him 'seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him' (*v.* 18). These faithful souls Elijah might well count for his hire. He knew them not even by name; but his heroic stand had helped to keep their feet also on the rock, and thus to defy the common danger. He was assured, too, that victory lay with himself and this Israel of God. Even now Jahweh was raising up a successor for the work; and till the Kingdom of God was established in power, there should never fail 'men of the Spirit' to carry it on. Cheered by this glad hope, Elijah rose from his gloom and despondency, girt up his loins, and returned on his way towards the wilderness of Damascus, to anoint Jahweh's ministers of justice (*vv.* 19ff.), and himself to labour on while duty called him, conscious that his labour was 'not vain in the Lord.'

The mantle of Elijah fell on Elisha, a man of far inferior stature, who yet rivalled his master in his

burning zeal for Jahweh. His energies were directed to two great ends: the extirpation of Baal-worship, and the consolidation of the forces of Jahwism. Elijah had won his battle against Baal by the force of his own God-inspired personality; in making good the victory Elisha remained in the background, directing the storm, while the real agents in the revolution were two men that seemed strangely mated with a prophet of righteousness, Jehu the ruthless captain of war, and Hazael the usurping king of Syria. The execution of their awful commission certainly lacked nothing in thoroughness. It was a veritable blood-bath in which Jehu wiped out the uncleanness of Jezreel; and the memory of Hazael's savagery haunted the mind of Israel as a curse blighting generations yet unborn. Carried out though it was in Jahweh's name, and at the direct instigation of Elisha, the act of bloodshed in Jezreel was for a later and greater prophet the prime cause of the impending destruction of Jehu's dynasty (Hos. i. 4), while the barbarity of Hazael towards the helpless villagers of Gilead was to be avenged by Jahweh, the lover of mercy, by a fire that would attack the house of Hazael and devour the palaces of Benhadad, and would sweep the people of Damascus into perpetual captivity (Amos i. 3ff.). Thus to the widening vision of prophecy not even zeal in Jahweh's service could excuse cruelty or oppression. The servant of the

righteous God must in all things recognize his responsibilities to the heavenly King, and act in the spirit of justice, tenderness and compassion. The more honourable the service, the graver the responsibility, and the more insistent the demand of righteousness.

The other side of Elisha's work was in its ultimate issue more fruitful in spiritual results, as it is also more agreeable to contemplate. In him the prophetic companies who played so powerful a part in kindling the enthusiasm of Israel against the enemies of their God and nationality found a true 'father' and counsellor. Under his restraining influence a saner spirit appears to have possessed them. We read of these 'sons of the prophets' as living now in settled communities, many of them married, with homes and families of their own. And the kindliest of feelings prevailed among them. The simple tales recorded in 2 Kings iv. are doubtless typical of many other 'little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love,' that made these prophets' homes models of godly grace and goodness. The same happy relations seem to have existed between the prophets and their rural neighbours. The home of Shunem was surely not the only one that possessed its 'prophet's chamber,' where the man of God was made welcome to rest and food as he 'passed by continually' on his missions of love; nor did the man of Baal-shalishah alone bring of the first-fruits

of his corn and barley for the sustenance of the prophets.[1]

There were no doubt dangers in such hospitality. The favoured communities were all too readily joined by men too lazy to work, who found it more pleasant to live on the charity of the pious, like the monks of a later age. This became a real ground of attack on the prophetic orders (cf. Amos vii. 12ff. ; Mic. iii. 5). But, while the cause of prophecy was dishonoured by its less worthy members, the planting of quiet, God-fearing families of prophets, up and down the land, must have wielded an incalculable influence for righteousness. In spite of manifold corruptions, Israel was in every age blessed with pious homes, where the fear of the Lord reigned, and men and women lived pure, upright and gracious lives. Of such homes the prophetic circles in Gilgal and elsewhere set the finest type ; and thus they proved not merely nurseries of prophetic character, but in other ways also centres from which prophetic influence spread among the people.

[1] The stories of Elisha are drawn from various local sources, the main groups dating from about the middle of the eighth century. Here, too, popular imagination has twined its wreath of legend round the sober facts of history ; but the memory of real personalities and deeds shines clearly from the picture.

CHAPTER III

Amos the Prophet of Justice

A CENTURY had passed since the crisis under Ahab. The throne of Israel was now occupied by Jeroboam II, the most illustrious of Jehu's dynasty. As the result of his long and vigorous rule (*c.* 783–743 B.C.) the wounds of Israel were healed, and the nation rapidly recovered its ancient power. Moab lay once more prostrate under the yoke; on the North, too, Jeroboam wrested from Syria the frontier towns of Gilead, and even part of the territory of Damascus, thus extending the bounds of Israel to their ideal range 'from the gateway of Hamath to the sea of the Arabah' (2 Kings xiv. 25), *i.e.* from the Orontes to the Dead Sea. With military success came wealth and luxury. Samaria vied with Tyre and Damascus in the splendour of its buildings. The king and nobles had their summer and winter houses, richly adorned with hewn stone and ivory, and furnished with all the comforts of advancing civilization (Amos iii. 15). In the intoxication of their new-found magnificence the haughty rulers of Israel forgot

the sterner discipline their fathers had undergone, and aped the manners of the nations around them, reclining on softly cushioned divans, and tasting with fastidious tooth 'lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall,' anointing themselves with the choicest perfumes, and drinking their bowlfuls of drained wine, singing foolish songs to the twanging of the lyre, and fancying themselves very Davids in skill (vi. 4ff.). But over against the brilliant debauchery of the Court circles rose the dark shadow of poverty, made ever deeper by the encroachments of wealth. To further their own pleasure rich men thought little of trampling down the toil-worn labourer, refusing him an honest wage, and for the debt even of 'a pair of shoes' selling him into slavery (ii. 6f.). The ladies of Samaria were almost as heartless and licentious as their lords (iv. 1f.), while the merchants in the market-place openly exalted knavery into a means of gain (viii. 5). Against such oppression in high places there was neither security nor redress. The law-courts were packed by the friends of the wealthy, and verdicts sold to the highest bidder, so that the name of Justice became a byword, leaving a taste in the mouth like wormwood (vi. 12). The Church stood equally apart from the poor man and his needs. So far as outward appearance went, religion shared in the general prosperity of the nation. At Bethel the king had erected a 'royal sanctuary,'

where the worship of Jahweh was carried through in stately fashion, under the direct auspices of the crown. The high places of Gilgal, Dan and Beer-sheba were likewise scenes of religious activity and display, the altars being crowded with festive throngs, and tithes and sacrifices offered in lavish abundance (iv. 4f.). Unhappily the Church was the mere creature of the State, bound hand and foot to the men who turned justice to wormwood and trampled righteousness in the dust. Religious sanction was even sought for their violence and injustice. They would subvert the cause of the poor, take the bread out of their mouth, and go straightway to worship God in His temple. They would actually lay themselves down before the altar on garments taken in pledge, abandoned to wine and the grossest impurity, in express defiance of the Covenant with their God (ii. 7f.). And the priests who represented the Divine will concerning Israel accepted their worship. To them Jahweh was a gracious God, who sought His people's welfare, and took supreme delight in their offerings. Under His keeping, therefore, no evil could befall them. Dangers might yet loom up; but the 'day of Jahweh' drew nigh, the day which should break in pieces the power of their enemies, and lead them to world-wide victory.[1] Thus

[1] The researches of Gressmann and his school have called attention to the wide prevalence of this hope in Israel, and

the priests and rulers trifled along, 'secure on the hill of Samaria,' and indifferent to the sorrows of their people, while the poor victims of oppression bore it all with stolid passivity, and no reproving voice dared uplift itself in the gates (v. 10ff.).

Suddenly the silence was broken by a word from Jahweh, the echoes of which reverberate through the centuries.

Amos was neither a prophet nor 'the son of a prophet': he stood in no relation to the prophetic guilds of his time. As he told Amaziah, with the thrill of honest pride in his tone, he was a plain working man, a shepherd and 'dresser of sycomore figs' on the upland pastures of Judah. But though a poor man, with none of the culture of the schools, Amos was a highly-gifted soul, whose faculties had been trained to fine perfection by the discipline of Nature and life. To us the desert seems depressingly void of interest; and 'the wilderness of Tekoa' was naked and desolate in the extreme.[1] But children of the desert like Amos find a real personal interest in the simplest happenings of their environment. Nothing seems to have escaped that eager eye. And all he saw linked itself together

its relation to ethnic mythologies. This school is apt, however, to exaggerate the influence of such *motifs* on the earlier prophets.

[1] On the scenery around Tekoa, and the opportunities it afforded for the nurture of a prophet like Amos, cf. G. A. Smith's fine description in *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, i. 74ff.

in reasoned chains of Cause and Effect. The majestic stalk of the lion, its roar as it leapt upon the prey, the flight of the birds, their sudden fall to earth, the springing of the trap, the blare of the trumpet from the watch-tower, the threshing of the corn and the shaking of the cart beneath its load of grain, the driving of cattle and steeds, the deadly struggle of shepherd and beast of prey, the ravages of the locust, the sweeter scenes of house-building and fruit-gathering, and the friendly walk of travellers in the desert, had been woven into the imagination of the herdsman, who could read their secrets, and draw unerring judgments as to their ways. But Amos' horizon was by no means confined to the narrow circle of the desert. Six miles to the North lay Bethlehem, with all its tender memories. From the pastures where he tended his flocks could be seen the towers of Jerusalem, some six miles further. Such constant association with sacred scenes was food enough for a thoughtful man's reflections. His calling as a shepherd provided still richer opportunities for observation of life. To sell his wool he had of necessity to frequent the fairs held usually in conjunction with religious festivals at the centres of national life. The vivid pictures drawn by Amos of social conditions at Samaria and Bethel are undoubtedly a transcript from what he had seen with his own eyes. The piercing glance which had been whetted to so keen

an edge by the training of the desert was now turned upon life and conduct. The sights he saw revolted the simple conscience of one reared on the pure traditions of Jahwism. Though naturally austere, he had deep sympathy with the poor, and compassion for the people who were perishing through the sins of others. Even in these early days hot indignation must have burned within his heart as he saw the Covenant so grievously profaned, and God's humble ones crushed underfoot. Perhaps he had already begun to apply the law of Causality to the moral world as well. These misguided rulers of Israel were turning moral order upside down; and not even the favour of their God could avert catastrophe. 'Can horses be driven with impunity on the edge of the precipice, or oxen put to plough in the sea without being drowned? How then can Israel hope to escape, if she continue to turn justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood?' (vi. 12).

These many side-lights into the natural character of Amos afford us suggestive indications of the true meaning of inspiration. There was nothing forced or mechanical in the Divine afflatus that caught up the prophets, and raised them so far above the level of their fellows. Inspiration was always vitally related to human personality, the prophet being simply the man, with all his natural powers quickened and born again by the Spirit of God.

The decisive experience which brought the new man to birth was the Call. And this also varied with the manifold varieties of human character. To Amos it was the precipitate of all he had seen and felt—in one overwhelming conviction. Through a series of visions it became clear to him that what he had dreaded for Israel must inevitably come to pass. The first of these visions move along traditional lines. God had already spoken to His people by pestilence, famine and fire; and the prophet's foreboding eye saw the terrors repeated. In the spring-time Jahweh revealed Himself fashioning locusts to destroy the verdure; then amid the drought of summer He called fire to the contest, drying up the wells, and reaching even to the great abyss, devouring the crops, and threatening to lick up the land.[1] Amos' compassions were kindled for poor Jacob, so helpless to stand against his Maker; he prayed God to forgive, and the danger passed (vii. 1ff.). Still the people refused to think or to amend their ways. Thus God could no more pass them by. In the third vision—that of Jahweh with the plumbline—Israel was likened to a wall cracked and crooked from top to bottom, which must be thrown to the ground ere it could be rebuilt true to the plumbline. And in the sword of the Assyrians, the same fateful power that in Ahab's

[1] חֶלֶק, lit. the *Lot or Portion* which Jahweh Himself had given to Israel.

reign had challenged the nations of the West, and was again beginning to loom darkly on the horizon of history, he saw the hammer that Jahweh would use to break down the wall. The language is vague, no doubt because Amos' knowledge of Assyria was vague.[1] But already his discerning glance beheld the foemen encamped on the hills that were counted so impregnable a rampart to Samaria, the counted and its proud palaces laid waste, the high places and altars profaned, and the people dragged in ignominious captivity far away beyond Damascus, to a land unclean, where the name of their God was unknown and disregarded (vii. 7ff.).

The two remaining visions bear out the certainty and overwhelming sweep of the disaster. The basket of fall fruit portended the irrevocable fall of Israel (viii. 1f.).[2] And the climax is reached in the terrible picture of Jahweh standing over the altar, commanding the columns to be smitten, and the temple to be brought in ruins upon the head of the people —then pursuing the fugitives with the sword, and searching them out from heaven

[1] For about half a century the tide of Assyrian invasion had rolled back from Israel, the Empire being then involved in a life and death struggle with the freedom-loving peoples of Armenia ; only with the accession of Pul, or Tiglath-Pileser IV (745–727 B.C.), did it threaten once more to submerge the West.

[2] I owe this suggestion to McFadyen, *Amos : A Cry for Justice*, p. 110. The play on ' fall ' very happily reproduces the original play on the words קַיִץ, *summer* or *autumn*, and קֵץ, *end*.

and Sheol, from the top of Carmel and the depths of the sea, till not one of them is left —His eyes being set upon them for evil, and not for good (ix. 1ff.).[1]

The Lord God had spoken unto Amos, and he must needs prophesy. Our book contains, no doubt, the crystallized essence of his preaching. It is laid out in separate oracles, corresponding to distinct cycles of prophecy, that may cover a period of some few weeks or months about the year 750 B.C., culminating in the dramatic encounter with Amaziah, the priest of Bethel. The allusions to Samaria (iii. 9; iv. 1; vi. 1) would indicate that the main part of Amos' activity was devoted to the capital; but the scene in ch. vii. clearly took place at Bethel. Even in their present artistic setting we can catch the fire that glowed beneath the pro-

[1] The prophet's visions were simply the projection, or clothing in outward appearance, of his spiritual emotions and convictions. Their ultimate source therefore lay in the Divine illumination that made him a prophet. The precise form of the visions, however, was often determined by external stimuli. Thus the two earliest visions of Amos—the locusts and the fire—were but reflections of former disasters. Of the newer moulds in which his phantasy took shape, the visions of the plumbline and the basket of fall fruit were in all probability suggested by the actual sight of a man with a plumbline testing his wall, and some one else carrying a basket of late autumn fruit. A prophet like Amos, pent up with the fire of Divine judgment, and equally full of foreboding for his people, would naturally enough clothe his convictions in any outward form that struck his imagination. On the other hand, the vision of Jahweh commanding to smite the altar is the direct bodying forth of thoughts and forecasts of doom that must often have passed through his mind.

phet's words. Here we have no elegantly turned essays on conduct, but the outpourings of a heart aflame with indignation, full of hot passion for God and righteousness. In this lies the secret of Amos' wonderful literary style. The clear-cut, sinewy diction, the dramatic cast of the whole, the vivid imagery, and the winged poetry in which his appeals are borne home to the conscience of every reader, are the direct, hot-blooded expression of his intense feeling.[1]

The prophecy opens with the thunder of Jahweh's judgment upon the nations. From Samaria the peals are heard rolling on every side, as the bolts of Divine wrath strike upon Syria and the Philistines, Ammon and Moab,[2] not for their acts of aggression

[1] The day is long past when Amos could be described as *imperitus sermone* (Jerome). Modern critics vie with each other in exalting the prophet's style. Nor is this mastery over language, on the part of an obscure Palestinian shepherd, to be wondered at. Robertson Smith has finely said, 'To associate inferior culture with the simplicity and poverty of pastoral life is totally to mistake the conditions of Eastern society. At the courts of the Caliphs and their Emirs the rude Arabs of the desert were wont to appear without any feeling of awkwardness, and to surprise the courtiers by the finish of their impromptu verses, the fluent eloquence of their oratory, and the range of subjects on which they could speak with knowledge and discrimination' (*The Prophets of Israel*, p. 126).

[2] The oracle on Tyre (i. 9f.) is but a weak shadow of the preceding; that on Edom (i. 11f.) reflects conditions that followed the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Lam. iv. 21f.; Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Ezek. xxv. 12ff., etc.); while that on Judah (ii. 4f.) is saturated with Deuteronomic ideas. Amos appears not to have touched on Judah, the allusions in iii. 1, vi. 1 being the result of Judaic

against Israel in themselves, but for their general inhumanities, for atrocities in war and deeds of wanton cruelty in times of peace, for insults to the dead and outrages on helpless women and children. To Amos it mattered not who were the victims of these crimes. Humanity was one and undivided; and the laws of morality prevailed throughout the world. The burning of the king of Edom's bones was as heinous an offence in Jahweh's sight as the grossest indignities perpetrated on Israel. And the nations that sinned must die. For their repeated transgressions—unable any longer to hold it back—Jahweh would send a fire into their midst, to devour their walls and palaces; and the peoples should perish amid tumult and tempest, the hurrahs and the noise of the trumpet in battle, while the kings and their princes passed into captivity together, said Jahweh (i. 3–ii. 3).

It is difficult for us to realize the measure of the step here taken by Amos. In ancient times morality was tribal or national. Its laws were binding as between members of the same social group; but beyond these limits moral obligation was lacking. Barbarities such as Amos condemns were practised on surrounding nations, even by an enlightened ruler like David, without the least qualm of conscience. It was even regarded as a matter of re-

redaction, after the book of Amos had become a literary treasure of Judaism.

ligious duty to put whole populations to the sword —to 'slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass' before Jahweh (1 Sam. xv. 3)—with whatever refinement of cruelty. Through the lips of Amos the Lord God taught His people far different conceptions of morality. The narrow local bounds were broken down; and moral duty was now revealed as universal in its range, co-extensive with the realm of humanity.

Amos' hearers would doubtless have listened with satisfaction to the rumblings of the storm among the nations. But anon the thunder crashes over their own heads. The Lord is indignant with them too—more indignant than with any nation. They parade the signs of their superior civilization. This, however, has its sins, refined perhaps, yet on that very account cutting the more deeply into the springs of character, and rousing to hotter flames the wrath of Him who reads the heart, than even the atrocities of barbarism. All their rich pomp and show, based as it was on injustice and oppression, was abomination to Jahweh, the lover of righteousness. His unceasing goodness to His people only intensified their guilt. Thus Israel also must be swept to destruction in the day of doom.

Thus saith Jahweh:
For three transgressions of Israel,
Yea, for four, I will not turn it back;

Because they have sold the poor man [1] *for silver,*
And the needy for a pair of shoes —
Crushing the head of the poor,
And trampling the face of the humble —
While a man and his father go unto one maid,
To profane my holy name ;
And by every altar they lay themselves down
On garments taken on pledge,
And the wine of such as are fined
They drink in the house of their God.

Yet 'twas I that destroyed the Amorite
Before your face —
Whose height was like that of the cedars,
Who was strong as oaks :
I destroyed his fruit from above,
And his roots from beneath. [2]
And I raised of your sons for prophets,
And your choice young men for Nazirites ;
But ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink,
And commanded the prophets, saying, Ye shall not prophesy !
Is this not even so,
Ye sons of Israel ? [3]

Behold, I will cause it to shake
Under your feet,
Like as a cart doth shake,
That is full of sheaves.
And refuge shall fail the swift,
And the fleet of foot shall escape not ; [4]
The strong shall not muster his might,
Nor the warrior save his life ;

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[1] For צַדִּיק, *righteous*, read צָעִיר, *small, poor* (Duhm).

[2] The allusion to the Exodus (*v.* 10) is a prosaic intrusion, which interrupts the context of the prophecy.

[3] The stanza ought naturally to end with the appeal to Israel (*v.* 11*b*).

[4] I have transposed this *stichos* (with Staerk), thus securing a true parallelism for all the couplets.

The bowman shall not stand,
Nor the rider of horse be saved;
But the stoutest of heart among warriors
Shall flee away naked that day.
The Rede of Jahweh! (ii. 6–16).

Thus far Israel finds her place in the moral fellowship of the nations. But in the complex of oracles that fill chapters iii.–vi. she stands alone before the bar of God's justice. And at once sentence is pronounced.

Hear this word that Jahweh hath spoken
Against you, O household of Israel:
You only have I known of all the families of earth,
Therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities (iii. 1f.).

To Amos himself this seeming paradox was in perfect harmony with ethical principle. Such lofty spiritual privileges as Israel had enjoyed meant fuller responsibility. Jahweh had called her to intimacy with Him, not for her own selfish pleasure, but that she might become His envoy to the world. And the neglect of this responsibility meant graver condemnation. So completely, however, did his teaching traverse the accepted creed of Israel that the prophet felt compelled to ground it on reason. Thus in a series of illustrations drawn from his desert experience he shows the law of Causality everywhere at work. Each cause has its own effect; and the spiritual world is equally ruled by Divine law.

Can two walk together,
Unless they have trysted?

Doth the lion roar in the forest,
And no prey be his?
Doth the young lion utter his voice,
Without having caught?

Doth the bird fall down to the earth,
And no net be there?
Doth the trap spring up from the ground,
And catch nothing at all?

Will the trumpet be blown (from the watch-tower),[1]
And the people not tremble?
Will evil befall a city,
And the Lord have not done it?

The lion hath roared;
Who doth not fear?
The Lord Jahweh hath spoken;
Who can but prophesy? (*vv.* 3–8).

If Israel had eyes to read the signs of the times, she would see in the very fact of prophecy an omen of impending disaster; for Jahweh spoke through His servants the prophets only when He was about to do His mighty works on earth (*v.* 7). Even apart from the voice of prophecy the sins of Samaria cried aloud for judgment. If the peoples in Ashdod (LXX. Assyria) and Egypt could be assembled on the hill of Samaria, they would be appalled at the tumults and disorders that abounded there, at the 'violence and robbery' which the false rulers of Israel 'piled up' in their treasuries.

[1] The first חָעִיר has most probably slipped in from the following couplet. The words within brackets are an indication of the original text.

Therefore, thus saith Jahweh:
A foe shall encompass the land,
And thy strength shall be stripped from off thee,
And thy palaces plundered (iii. 11).

From the fury of destruction only a handful of Israel shall be saved.

Thus saith Jahweh:
As a herdsman doth save from the mouth of the lion
A couple of shin-bones or the tip of an ear,
Even so shall be saved they that sit in Samaria,
On the edge of a couch, on a cushioned divan (*v.* 12).

With grim joy the rugged countryman pictures the summer house piled on the wreckage of the winter house, while the palaces of hewn stone and ivory perish in the flames (*v.* 15). Then he turns upon the sleek 'daughters of Samaria' who encouraged their lords to sin—whose cruelty and sensuality he regards as the last proofs of moral degradation.

Hear this word, kine of Bashan,
On the hill of Samaria,
They that grind down the poor,
And make raids on the needy,
That say to their lords,
Bring us wine, that we drink!

Thus Jahweh hath sworn by His holiness:
Behold, on you there come days,
When with hooks men shall catch you,
Even the last one with fish-hooks;
And out shall ye go through the breaches,
One after one of you cast out naked[1] (iv. 1–3).

[1] On this very difficult text cf. Kittel's note.

The prophet's words of doom were heard by the listening crowds in sheer amazement. Was not Jahweh their God? And did they not bring Him sacrifices every morning, and tithes each third day, besides the tribute of thanksgiving and free-will offerings? How then could He forsake them in the hour of need? But to this strange interpreter of the Divine their many offerings were only multiplied transgression (iv. 4f.). Jahweh had once and again spoken to them by drought and famine, blasting and mildew, pestilence and the sword (*vv.* 6–11);[1] and because they refused to return unto Him, they must prepare to meet Him in judgment. The terrors of the day of judgment move the heart even of an Amos; and he falls into the broken lilt of the dirge.[2]

Fallen is the virgin of Israel,
She shall rise no more;
Prostrate she lies on the ground,
With none to upraise her.

The city that went forth a thousand
Shall have left an hundred;
And she that went forth an hundred
Shall have left but ten (v. 2f.).

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[1] This also is a fine poem in four-lined stanzas, each ending with the refrain, *But ye turned not to me, saith Jahweh.*

[2] The majestic Hymn of Nature (iv. 13) is clearly an intrusion. Scattered fragments of the same Hymn are met with in v. 8f. and ix. 5f., where the interruption of the context is still more evident. The thought here is strikingly reminiscent of Deutero-Isaiah; and the author of the Hymn is doubtless one of his school.

The door of salvation, however, is not closed. The God of Israel is gracious; and in simple, earnest tones Amos beseeches the people to turn unto Him and live.

Seek Jahweh[1] *and live,*
But seek not Bethel;
To Gilgal go not,
And pass not to Beersheba![2]

Seek Jahweh and live,
Lest fire break out,
And consume the house of Joseph,
With none to quench it![3]

Seek good, not evil,
That ye may live;
And Jahweh be with you indeed,
As ye do say.

Hate evil, and love good,
And set up Justice!
Jahweh may yet be gracious
To the remnant of Joseph (v. 4ff.).

Though his heart's desire is that Israel may be saved, Amos has little real hope. So many are their transgressions, and so flagrant their sins, that he

[1] As Jahweh is throughout referred to in the third person, I have read יהוה instead of the 1st pers. suffix.

[2] The arrangement of this oracle is so clearly strophic that it seems necessary to omit from this context (though it may well be an authentic part of Amos' prophecy) the vigorous couplet:

For Gilgal shall go into exile,
And Bethel to perdition (v. 5c).

[3] A considerable dislocation has here taken place, the true sequel to *v.* 6 being found in *vv.* 14f. The intervening verses (apart from the fragment of the Hymn of Nature in *vv.* 8f.) belong to the 'Woe' section resumed in *vv.* 16ff.

can foresee but wailing and lamentation in all the streets and broadways, fields and vineyards, when Jahweh passes through the midst (*vv.* 16f.). As for those who look to the Day of Jahweh for salvation,

Ah! ye that long for the day of the Lord!
For what would ye have the day of the Lord?
Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, not light —
Gross darkness, and no ray therein?[1]

'Tis as when a man doth flee from a lion,
And a bear doth meet him;
Or doth go to his house, and lay his hand on the wall,
And a serpent doth bite him.

I hate, I despise your holy days,
I will smell not the smell of your festivals;
Your gifts I will not accept,
Nor look on your offerings of fat ones.

Away with the din of your songs!
I will hear not your strumming of viols;
But let justice roll down as waters,
And right as a flowing stream! (*vv.* 18–24).

In the glad days of Israel's intimacy with Jahweh in the wilderness He neither received nor asked for sacrifice and offerings; He sought only faith and righteousness (*v.* 25).[2] Thus with bitter scorn the

[1] If we are not to omit *v.* 19 as a prosaic expansion (Duhm) we should at least transpose it with *v.* 20. The latter is the evident close of the first stanza, as the fragment הוֹא־חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא אוֹר indicates.

[2] The very obscure *v.* 26 is probably a later application of the same idea to the hybrid population of Galilee, with their mixture of Assyrian cults, notably the worship of Sakkuth and Kewan, the star-god Saturn: *Or carried ye round (in procession) Sakkuth your king and Kewan your star-god, the idols that ye made for yourselves?*

prophet assails the careless revellers, who feasted and sang while their people were perishing.

Ah! ye that are easy in Israel,
And secure on the hill of Samaria;
Ye lords of the first of the nations,
And as gods (?) to the household of Israel;[1]

That recline on ivory couches,
And lie spread out on divans;
That eat the lambs of the flock,
And calves from the midst of the stall;

That sing foolish songs to the harp,
And are counted fine singers like David;[2]
That drink drained wine from the bowl,
And with choicest of oils anoint them;

That put off the day of evil,
And bring near ruin and violence;
* * *
But for Joseph's wound are not sick!

So now shall they pass into exile
At the head of the captives;
And the riot of the revellers shall cease,
Saith Jahweh, the Lord of Hosts (vi. 1–7).

Already He has given commandment to the foe; and 'the great house shall be smitten to atoms, and the little house to splinters,' while their inhabitants are decimated by sword and pestilence (*vv.* 8ff.).

[1] The context is here interrupted by an appeal to certain incidents of Assyrian invasion between the years 720 and 711 B.C. The most natural place for *v.* 3 appears to be after 6*b*. Unfortunately, the third *stichos* is missing.

[2] On the textual difficulty, cf. Kittel's note.

Can horses run on the cliff,
Or the sea be ploughed with cattle —
That ye have turned judgment to gall,
And the fruit of justice to wormwood?

Ye that rejoice over Lodebar (Nought),
* * *
That say, Was it not by our strength
We took us Karnaim (a Pair of Horns)? [1]

Behold! O household of Israel,
I raise against you a nation,
That from Hamath's gate shall afflict you,
Even to the brook of the Arabah (vv. 12–14).

With the burden of doom weighing thus heavily on his heart, Amos at length reached Bethel, the Canterbury of Israel. It was the occasion of some great festival, when the sanctuary was thronged with worshippers. The sweet savour of their offerings rose to heaven, while the temple-walls resounded with the strains of song and the melody of viols. The joy of worship was mingled with festivity and pleasure-seeking. Into this gay scene Amos thrust himself with his unwelcome message. Calmly he tells of his visions, and of Israel's escape from famine and fire. But when he pictures the downfall of the crooked wall, and the raising of Jahweh's sword against the house of Jeroboam, the growing indignation of Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, bursts into fury. The intrusion of a Jewish fanatic within the precincts of the royal chapel was uncalled-for

[1] Here Amos plays on the names of two cities of Gilead whose capture had afforded special pride to Israel.

presumption; and now presumption has passed into treason! A hurried messenger is sent to Jeroboam with the news of the 'conspiracy,' and the prophet is bidden flee with what speed he may to his home in Judah. 'Away, thou visionary! Off with thee to the land of Judah; and there eat thy bread, and there play the prophet! But at Bethel play no more the prophet; for this is the king's sanctuary, and this the House of the kingdom' (vii. 12f.). In dignified tones Amos hurls back the charge. He is no mercenary prophet, no fanatic or idle babbler, but one whom Jahweh has called from his flocks to prophesy. And Amaziah will soon learn in his own person the truth of his words! In due time the prophet returns home—to commit his message to writing, and thus make it a spiritual possession for all time—but not without completing the tale of his visions, and leaving his readers with one final oracle from Jahweh.

Hear this, ye that trample the needy,
And oppress the poor of the land,
Saying, When will the New Moon pass,
That we may sell our corn,
And the Sabbath, that we may open,
And sell the refuse of grain,[1]
Making the ephah small, and the shekel great,
And forging scales of deceit?[2]

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[1] The final clause is recovered from *v.* 6, where it is quite out of place.

[2] The following couplet is probably a mere variant to ii. 6, which reads very awkwardly in this context.

By the Glory of Jacob hath Jahweh sworn :
Your deeds I will never forget ! [1]
I will turn your feasts into mourning,
And all your songs into dirges.
I will bring up sackcloth on all your loins,
And baldness on every head :
I will make it like mourning for an only son,
And the end thereof as a bitter day.

Behold ! days come, saith Lord Jahweh,
When famine I send through the land —
No hunger for bread, nor thirst for water,
But for hearing the word of the Lord.
They shall wander from sea to sea,
And shall scour from North to sunrise,
Seeking the word of the Lord,
But shall not be able to find it.

In that day shall the fair maidens
Faint with the choice young men,
Even they that swear by Bethel's God,
And the Guilt [3] *of Samaria —*
That say, By the life of thy God, O Dan !
By the life of thy Loved One, Beersheba ! [4]

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[1] *V.* 8 is an evident variant to ix. 5, while *v.* 9 is an apocalyptic fragment.

[2] A conflict of thought has been traced between *vv.* 11f. and 13, the former clearly pointing to a spiritual famine, the latter to literal drought. Accordingly, Wellhausen and other scholars would omit *vv.* 11f., while G. A. Smith proposes to excise *v.* 13. The simple omission of בַּצָּמְא relieves the difficulty, and brings the two stanzas into natural connexion.

[3] The *Ashmah* or *Ashima* (2 Kings xvii. 30) is probably the female counter-part to *Ashem-Bethel* who figures alongside of Jahweh on the Assouan papyrus 20.

[4] On the additions necessary to bring sense into these lines, cf. Kittel's notes. The divine name Dod—*Loved One*—is found on the Mesha Stone, l. 12.

They shall fall (by the way),
And shall rise no more.[1]

Are ye not as the Cushites to me,
O children of Israel? saith Jahweh.
Brought I not Israel up from the land of Egypt,
As the Philistines from Caphtor, and Aram from Kir?
And, lo! the eyes of Lord Jahweh
Are upon the sinful nation;
And I will destroy it utterly,
From off the face of the ground[2] (viii. 4ff.).

Amos thus lays all the stress on Justice. For him justice is virtually identified with religion. God is righteous; and what He demands of His people is not sacrifice, but righteousness—honesty and fair dealing towards all men. And, as He is Lord of the world, whatsoever stands in the way

[1] The context is here interrupted by the fifth vision and its expansion (ix. 1–6).

[2] The lovely picture of Israel's restoration (ix. 8*c*–15) is regarded by almost all recent scholars as an addition to the authentic words of Amos, couched in the ideas and language of later prophecy, and presupposing the actual fall of the kingdom of Judah (*v.* 11). Gressmann has attempted to save them for Amos by his theory of mythological *motifs* (cf. *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie*, pp. 193ff.). In his hands the theory does grave injustice to the originality of the prophets. The essential distinction between prophets and apocalyptists lies just in this, that the latter spun elaborate visions out of such *motifs* as Gressmann postulates—though at a later date—while the prophets had their eyes directly fixed on moral and religious realities. If so, it can hardly be doubted that the closing verses of Amos contradict, not merely the letter of his preaching to Israel, but even the visions through which Jahweh's mind became known to him, the darkness of the coming doom being there relieved by no ray of light.

of righteousness must perish, the wayward policy of Israel no less than the degrading superstitions and cruelties of the nations. *Fiat justitia, ruat Israel!* In striking this note so decisively, Amos led prophecy into a new path: he became 'the founder and the purest expression of a new phase of prophecy,'[1] through which the religion of Israel was raised far beyond its national limitations, and became the common inspiration of mankind.

At the same time, Amos' thought of God was terribly cold and stern. The clear majesty of the Divine had laid strong hold of his imagination, but the grace of His countenance was veiled from him. The austere moralist had little sympathy with the love that blotteth out iniquity: he knew nothing of the 'kindness in God's justice' of which the modern poet sings. But God meant not to conceal this side of His Being from His children. Thus in Amos' own life-time another prophet was called to pass through the dark valley of suffering, sorrow and shame, that he might know the love of God 'which passeth knowledge,' and hence lead men to the well-springs of salvation. For it is one of the many paradoxes of spiritual life that, however bracing to the conscience, the preaching of pure morality—the Categorical Imperative—can never produce the finest traits of human character, which is the image of the Divine. 'Now abideth faith,

[1] Wellhausen, *Isr. u. Jüd. Geschichte*[2], p. 107.

hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.' For God is Love. [1]

[1] G. A. Smith has adduced various interesting comparisons between Amos and *Piers the Plowman*. In their sympathy with the poor, and their unsparing condemnation of personal and social vice, the two are closely akin, though Langland remains loyal to Church and King, looking for reformation rather than destruction, while Amos can see no hope of better things. In this respect an even more obvious parallel is found in Carlyle, who likewise identifies religion with justice, and regards increase of material wealth, not based on justice, as but a swelling of the waters about to shoot Niagara. 'Justice, Justice: woe betide us everywhere when, for this reason or for that, we fail to do justice! No beneficence, benevolence, or other virtuous contribution will make good the want. . . . There is but one thing needed for the world; but that one is indispensable. Justice, Justice, in the name of heaven; give us Justice, and we live; give us only counterfeits of it, or succedanea for it, and we die!' (*Latter-Day Pamphlets*, II. p. 68).

CHAPTER IV

Hosea the Prophet of Love

When Amos lifted up his voice in prophecy, there seemed not a speck in the heavens. He alone descried on the far horizon the cloud, no larger than a man's hand, raised by the gathering hosts of Assyria. Jeroboam died in peace about 743 B.C. His son Zechariah assumed the reins of government, and all things seemed as stable and prosperous as before. But hardly had he begun his rule when the forces of disorder broke loose, and Israel was plunged into a very maelstrom of trouble. Within six months the king had fallen beneath the assassin's sword, and the line of Jehu came to an ignominious end. The usurper Shallum, son of Jabesh, held sway for a brief month, when he too perished in a counter-insurrection led by Menahem, son of Gadi, a rude soldier, who carved his way to the throne by ferocious cruelties. He reigned for some six years (*c.* 743–737), averting ruin from his house by a heavy tribute paid to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, and exacted from 'the men of wealth' (2 Kings xv. 20), those luxurious grandees on whom Amos had poured such vials of wrathful scorn.

Menahem seems to have died a natural death, his son Pekahiah reigning in his stead. In little over a year, however, the commander-in-chief Pekah, son of Remaliah, headed another conspiracy, slew the king in his palace, and assumed the power (735 B.C.). During his reign the Assyrian flood at last swept over Israel. Pekah had foolishly leagued himself with Rezin, king of Syria, in an attempt to crush the sister kingdom of Judah, and Ahaz appealed to Assyria for help. Quick to take advantage of their discord, Tiglath-Pileser fell upon Gilead and Galilee, ravaged the country, and deported the population to Assyria; then swooping backwards on Damascus, he stormed the city after a two years' siege, put Rezin to the sword, and carried his people captive to Kir (732). Samaria was saved by the insurrection of Hoshea, son of Elah, a creature of the Assyrians, who murdered Pekah, and himself usurped the throne. But the truce was short. Ambitious of a freer hand in government, Hoshea became involved in Egyptian designs against the over-lord, with the result that Shalmaneser IV, the new king of Assyria, descended in hot fury upon his rebellious vassal, seized and imprisoned him, and began a close siege of his capital (724 B.C.). Shalmaneser died while the siege was still in progress; but in the first year of his successor Sargon II (722 or 721) the city was reduced amid terrible scenes of suffering, the native population swept off to

Assyria, and a new race of 'Samaritans' planted in their stead—a thorn in the side of the pure stock of Abraham for centuries to come.

Hosea's prophetic ministry covers the first decade of this period of disintegration. He began to prophesy a year or two before Jeroboam's death, while the 'house of Jehu' still flourished (i. 4). His broken-hearted utterances afford ample evidence that he lived through those orgies of blood-shed, lust and crime, which accompanied the successive revolutions in Israel, until perhaps the accession of Pekah in 735 B.C. The last agonies of his people he appears to have been spared. There is no allusion to the war with Judah and the ravages of Tiglath-Pileser. Gilead and Galilee are still part of the body politic of Israel (cf. v. 1; vi. 8; xii. 11). Nothing even indicates that Israel has broken with Assyria. She is pictured as a silly dove, fluttering helplessly between Egypt and Assyria, but her wings are not yet definitely set in the direction of Egypt. Still less has the final blow descended. Hope continues to struggle with despair. Even at the eleventh hour, if Israel will but turn to her God in honest repentance and faith, He will have mercy upon His children, 'will heal their backsliding, and will love them freely;' for His anger is turned away from them (xiv. 4).[1]

The earlier prophecies of Hosea are cast in the

[1] The book of Hosea falls into two main divisions: the story

usual mould : their burden is doom, inexorable and swift. The storm falls first on the royal house. To a son born to him soon after he began to prophesy he gives the name of Jezreel, as a sign that Jahweh will speedily ' avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease ' (i. 4). But the whole nation is rapidly drawn within the vortex of destruction. Israel also has sinned, and must pay the sinner's penalty. The tale of sin is much the same as Amos had counted against the people : ' swearing and breaking of faith, killing and stealing and committing adultery, violence and bloodshed linked to bloodshed.' But, whereas the eye of the earlier seer had been trained upon the outward conduct of life, the more reflective spirit of Hosea dwells on the springs of character—the motives and principles that make men good or evil—reducing these to the fundamental qualities of *truth*, or self-

of his domestic sorrow (i.–iii.) and the collection of prophecies proper (iv.–xiv.). The former is generally assigned to the age of Jeroboam, and the latter to the period of national disintegration that followed his death. The beginning of the tragic story does, indeed, fall within the reign of Jeroboam ; but, as it covered a period of some seven or eight years, the later developments of the tragedy may well have extended to the period of the Decline and Fall. On the other hand, the earliest of the prophecies contained in iv.–xiv. may belong to Jeroboam's reign. It seems better, therefore, to regard the sections as historically parallel, the domestic tragedy developing *pari passu* with the prophet's preaching.

consistency of moral purpose, and *love*, the tender, faithful sympathy which inspires deeds of humanity, kindliness and affection. And, as human goodness is essentially the expression of man's walk with God, he finds the fountain of life in the *knowledge of God*, the loving intimacy with which the devout man stands related to his God. In the lack of this knowledge lay the real root of Israel's sin. Jahweh had a controversy with His people, because there was 'no truth nor love, and no knowledge of God in the land' (iv. 1f.). Sacrifice and offerings were no moral equivalent of knowledge. Indeed, the worship as practised by Israel 'under oaks and poplars and terebinths' was the crowning sin of the age: it was 'whoredom' against Jahweh—it seduced men from the worship He delighted in, and was the fruitful source of drunkenness and debauchery and all uncleanness (*vv.* 10ff.). Thus the people were 'ruined for lack of knowledge,' their brains befogged and their affections petrified by wine and harlotry. Yet the prophet could not find it in his heart to blame them.

> *Let no man rebuke, nor find fault;*
> *For my people are like their pastors*[1] (iv. 4).

To the priests and prophets of Israel Jahweh had committed His knowledge; but they had betrayed their trust, conniving at the people's guilt, and set-

[1] Cf. Kittel's note. The *Kemarim* were a species of degenerate priests (cf. Hos. x. 5; Zeph. i. 14).

ting them an actual example in profanity and vice.

As they grew in numbers, they sinned against me,
Their glory they turned into shame:
They feed on the sin of my people,
Their heart they set on their guilt (iv. 7f.).

Through their deeds of violence they had become a snare and net by which to trap the unwary (v. 1f.),[1] while the leading sanctuaries of the land were steeped in the blood which they had shed.

At Adam[2] *they broke the covenant,*
Betrayed me there;
A city of ill-doers is Gilead,
Stained deep with blood.

As a troop of robbers in wait
Is the band of priests;
On the way to Shechem they murder,
They do their misdeeds.

In Bethel, too, have I seen
A deed of horror;
There Ephraim hath played the whore,
Defiled is Israel (vi. 7–10).

If Israel had been humble, Jahweh might have accepted the excuse. But she herself plunged headlong after the sins of her rulers, stubborn as a heifer that would not keep to the pasture (iv. 16), her pride staring out on her face, even while she stumbled in the toils (v. 5). No warnings could deter the people from their folly. The sound of the clarion but drove them to Assyria and King

[1] At the beginning of *v.* 2 read וְשַׁחַת הַשִּׁטִּים, *A deep pit have they dug at Shittim.*

[2] The name of a place is here required, either Adam (a locality quite unknown) or some other name resembling it.

Pick-quarrel,[1] regardless of Him who had wounded, and alone could heal (v. 8ff.). If in their desolation they did seek Him with tears, their repentance was all so shallow, their love 'as a morning cloud, or like dew which passeth early away,' that He knew not what to do with them (vi. 1–4).

By the words of my mouth I slew them,
And my judgment went forth as light;
For love I delight in, not sacrifice,
And knowledge of God more than offerings (*vv.* 5f.).

Instead of love and the knowledge of God they heaped up their villainies, filling both palace and street with bloodshed, and recking not in their hearts that Jahweh remembered their wickedness (vii. 1f.). Thus Israel had become a raging furnace in which king and princes were consumed.

They gladden the king with their villainy,
The princes with their lies;
On the day of our king the princes
Are sick with the fumes of wine.

He clasps his hand with scorners,
Whose heart is enkindled with treachery;
All night their anger sleepeth,
In the morning it burns as a flame.

Yea, all of them glow like an oven,
And their rulers they devour;
All their kings are fallen,
And none of them calleth to me[2] (*vv.* 3–7).

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[1] I have here followed G. A. Smith's apt rendering of *King Jareb* (lit. *Contender*, or *Quarrelsome one*). It is possible, however, that we should read מֶלֶךְ רַב, *the Great King*, a common designation of the king of Assyria.

[2] This picture of horrors, which may be compared with

It was perhaps during the madness of this Reign of Terror that the prophet's daughter was born. At Jahweh's suggestion he called her Lo-ruhamah, *The Unloved One*, as the sign that He had lost all love for His faithless people (i. 6). As if national vices were not enough to turn God's love to loathing, Ephraim mixed himself up with the nations, and was become like a cake full of heathen ingredients, and that 'unturned'—scorched black on the one side, while the heart was raw and damp and sour. Old age also was creeping over him, with grey hairs that foreshadowed the approaching end.

Ephraim among the nations
Is all mixed up;
Ephraim is become a cake
That hath not been turned.

Strangers have devoured his strength,
And he knoweth it not;
Even grey hairs are sprinkled upon him,
And he knoweth it not (vii. 8f.).

Like a silly dove Israel now called unto Egypt, and now fluttered after Assyria, heedless of a nation's only sure refuge (*v.* 11). In times of famine and distress they lay howling on their beds, crying unto Baal, and tearing themselves for corn and wine;

Carlyle's description of the Reign of Terror in Paris (*The French Revolution*, Vol. III., Books iv. v.), has been marred by the intrusion of a prosaic explanation (*v.* 4): *All this is taken from (the analogy of) bakers. They are like a burning oven, when the baker ceaseth to stir the fire from the kneading of the dough until it be leavened.* On other changes required, cf. Kittel's notes.

and, though Jahweh had strengthened their arms for the fight, they trusted rather in their own sword and bow—'a swerving bow' that could not hit the mark (*vv.* 14–16). Israel had spurned what was good: she had chosen kings without Jahweh's consent, and princes without His knowledge; she had sown the wind, and must now reap the whirlwind (viii. 3–7). It was all in vain that she dallied with the nations: she passed among them as a 'useless vessel,' without either beauty or profit. Within her own borders, the altars she raised to sin by, with the flesh of the sacrifices she loved to eat, would turn to her destruction (*vv.* 11–14).

Rejoice not, O Israel,
Nor exult as the nations;
For away from thy God hast thou whored,
Thou lovest the harlot's hire.

On all the threshing-floors
The corn shall vanish;[1]
The wine-press shall know them not,
And the must shall fail them.

So shall they dwell not
In Jahweh's land;
To Egypt shall Ephraim return,
And in Asshur shall eat unclean (bread).

No more wine shall they pour unto Jahweh,
Nor spread for Him (an offering);
As mourning bread are their sacrifices,
All that eat thereof are polluted.

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[1] For the second גֹּרֶן read יִגָּזֵר, *shall be cut off* (Duhm). On other alterations cf. Kittel's notes.

Since the bread they desire cometh not
Into Jahweh's house,
What shall they[1] *have for the holy day,*
For Jahweh's festival?

Behold! they shall go unto Asshur,
Egypt shall gather them;[2]
Thorns shall possess their land,[3]
And nettles their tents.

Come are the days of judgment,
The time of recompense;
Come are the days of vengeance,
Israel shall know it (ix. 1–7).

In a series of lovely images Hosea pictures the beauty of Israel's childhood and youth. As 'grapes in the wilderness' Jahweh had found them; as 'first-ripe figs' He saw their fathers (ix. 10). As a tamarisk[5] beside rocks, 'planted on meadow-land,' the infant nation grew up before Him (*v.* 13). A luxuriant vine, she yielded Him much sweet fruit (x. 1). Like a well-trained heifer, she received His yoke 'over her fair neck,' and with willing obedience ploughed the clods and threshed the harvest of righteousness

[1] I have here read the third person, which the context seems to demand.

[2] In the first *stichos* read אַשּׁוּר for מִשְּׁר. The *stichoi* on Egypt and Memphis are evident variants, the former of which has been adopted as more in harmony with Hosea's general usage (cf. vii. 11; ix. 3).

[3] For מַחְמַד, *pleasant thing*, read מַכְמָם, *dwelling-place* (LXX). The following לִכְסָפָם, *to their silver things*, is probably an attempt to explain the corrupted text.

[4] I have slightly expanded the original here.

[5] For אֲשֶׁר read אֵשֶׁל, a *tamarisk*.

(*v.* 11). As a flock of docile sheep He 'tended'[1] her in the desert, 'through a land of burning drought' (xiii. 5). Even as a son He loved her, and called her unto Him from Egypt, took her in His arms, and healed her little sores, taught her to walk, and drew her on 'with leading-strings of love' (xi. 1ff.). But the more tenderly He dealt with His people, the more they rebelled against Him, setting up their altars and calves to Baal (ix. 10; x. 1; xi. 2; xii. 11; xiii. 2), forswearing the Covenant and turning justice into hemlock (x. 4), ploughing wickedness and reaping iniquity (*v.* 13), gaining them riches like the Canaanites by 'scales of deceit,' and never once considering that 'all their gettings touch not the guilt of their sins'[2] (xii. 7f.). Jahweh had laboured unweariedly to bring them to a better mind; but they had called His prophet a fool and the 'man of the Spirit' mad—they had lain in wait for them even in the house of God, had planted 'a fowler's snare' in all their paths, and dug deep pits to ruin them[3] (ix. 8f.). Thus steadily His anger rises against His treacherous children. He has long since ceased to love them, and now He can no more regard them as children.

[1] Read רְעִתִּיךָ (LXX, etc.).

[2] The above clear sense is directly recovered from the Septuagint.

[3] The best solution of the difficulties in ix. 8f. appears to be that of Duhm, who begins the stanza with the displaced words בֵּית אֱלֹהָיו, and thereafter reads צֹפֶה אֶפְרַיִם אֶל־הַנָּבִיא, rightly regarding the second מַשְׁטֵמָה as the beginning of the

To a son born of Gomer, some three years after Lo-ruhamah, the prophet gives the still more ominous name of Lo-ammi, *Not my people*; 'for ye are not my people, and I am not your God,' saith Jahweh (i. 9). And the piercing accents of his prophecy become increasingly poignant with the note of doom.

As a bird shall their glory flee,
Of birth, and womb, and conception;
Though they bear, I will destroy
The darlings of their womb.

Though they rear their children up,
I will rob them of manhood;
When I turn from them, Ah, woe!
They must yield them to the slaughter (ix. 11ff.).

In that day naught they trust in shall avail them for help. The calf of Samaria must follow their other gifts to King Pick-quarrel (x. 6), while their own king shall be tossed away 'like brush-wood upon the waters' (*v.* 7); the 'high places of wickedness' with their altars shall be given over to thorns and thistles, while the worshippers call out to the mountains to cover them, and the hills to fall on them (*v.* 8); their chariots and fortresses shall be shattered amid the alarum of war, and the mothers dashed in pieces over their children (*v.* 14). Nor

marginal correction, and reading שַׂחֲתוּ for שִׁחֲתוּ (cf. also Kittel): *In the house of his God Ephraim watches for the prophet; a fowler's snare is in all his ways* (*to trap him*), *and deep have they made the pit for him.*

is any comfort to be found in the memory of Jahweh's past goodness to them.

Compassion is hid from mine eyes,
For a foolish son is he;
And now no more can he stand
In the mouth of the womb.[1]

From the power of Sheol can I ransom thee,
Or from Death redeem thee?
Where are thy plagues, O Death,
Where thy ruin, Sheol?[2]

He may flourish among the reeds,
But the East wind shall come;
It shall come, and shall dry up his spring,
And shall scorch his fountain.[3]

Waste shall be laid Samaria,
And (her people) shall fall by the sword;
Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
And their women with child ripped up (xiii. 13–16).

Had Hosea been a man of inflexible spirit like Amos, his prophecy must have ended here. Jahweh's compassions were closed; it seemed as if no prayer thenceforth could reach His heart.

[1] The opening words of this stanza are recovered from the close of *v.* 14, where they stand in isolation. בְּמִשְׁבַּר בָּנִים, *lit.* 'in the breaking forth of children' (the place whence children break forth). One naturally compares John iii. 4, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?' At this period of his ministry Hosea saw no second birth possible for Israel; but growing insight into God's heart made all things possible.

[2] It is necessary to read this stanza as implying the hopelessness of redemption. The second couplet might be rendered, *Come with thy plagues, O Death! With thy ruin, Sheol!*

[3] On the textual changes required in this stanza cf. Kittel's notes.

But, whereas Amos stood aloof from the people whose ways he condemned, Hosea was one of themselves—a son of the rich and beauteous Northland, who took the purest delight in its fields and woods, its smiling vineyards and cultivated mountain-slopes—a kindly neighbour, who fain would have saved his people from their fate, and whose words of vengeance came as great bursts of sorrow from a bleeding heart. He was a married man, too, with wife and children around his hearth ; and he boldly transferred his human affections to God. Uplifted by them, he stormed the heavens by his love. In spite of Jahweh's wrath against Israel, he felt He was still essentially love. His wrath was the actual measure of His love : it was a Father's wrath —the reaction of a love beyond all human understanding, cut to the quick by His children's ingratitude and sin. For Jahweh to give up Israel was as hard as for Hosea to cast from his home the children he had fondled in his arms and taught to walk. Now that He has to pronounce the final words of rejection, He cannot bring Himself to carry out the judgment.

How can I give thee up, Ephraim—
Abandon thee, Israel ?
How can I make thee like Admah,
Treat thee like Zeboim ?

My heart is turned within me,
My compassions are kindled together ;
I cannot work out the heat of my wrath,
I cannot again make havoc of Ephraim.

For I am God, and not man—
The Holy One in thy midst;
I come no more to consume (thee),
* * * (xi. 8f.).

If only they would open their hearts to His affection, He would love them as freely as in the days of old, and make them the beauty and joy of all the earth.

Return to thy God, O Israel;
For thou'rt fallen by thy guilt.
Yea, return ye to Jahweh, take with you words,[1]
And speak to Him thus:

'Do Thou wholly remove the guilt,
And let us find good!
Then will we make return
With the fruit of our lips.

'Asshur shall not save us,
We will ride not on horses;[2]
No more will we say "Our gods"
To the work of our hands.'

I will heal their backsliding,
I will love them freely;
I will be as the dew unto Israel—
He shall bloom as the lily.

He shall strike his roots like the poplar,[3]
And his saplings shall spread;
His beauty shall be like the olive's,
And his fragrance as Lebanon.

They shall dwell once more in my shadow,
Shall refresh themselves with my pleasures;
They shall blossom like the vine,
And their scent be as wine of Lebanon.

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[1] I have here transposed the clauses, in the interests of sense and rhythm. On other alterations, cf. Kittel's notes.

[2] That is, *We shall no more seek help from Egypt.*

[3] Read לִבְנֹה for לְבָנוֹן (drawn from the following couplet).

O Ephraim, what dost thou longer with idols?
I will answer, and care for thee:[1]
I am as an ever-green cypress —
Of me thy fruitage is found (xiv. 1–8).

In these gracious words we breathe the very atmosphere of Galilee, and catch the first clear utterance of the Gospel of the Father's all-forgiving love; but a deeper note is struck in Hosea, one that vibrates in sympathy with the message of Calvary, and which he also learned through suffering.

About the time when he began to feel the movings of the Spirit of God within his breast, Hosea had married a maiden of Israel, Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, in whose love he found his only human refuge amid the sadness and sorrow of his ministry. Three children came to add sunshine to their love; then the light of his life turned to darkness. Like so many of the daughters of Israel, Gomer had yielded to the seductions of Baal worship, and betrayed her husband's affection. Perhaps his Puritanical instincts were too strong for her warm love of life and its pleasures. Be this as it may, she gave her heart to another, and fell into the grossest sin. For a time, it would seem, she was able to conceal her guilt; then the whole sordid story came to light, and Hosea realized that, in listening to the promptings of God and love, he had taken into his bosom 'a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom' (i. 2). The shock of such a discovery rent his

[1] I have read the 2nd person, as in the closing *stichos*.

moral nature to the roots. His sensitive spirit recoiled from the touch of impurity; yet he struggled to save his sinful wife from the fate of the adulteress, imploring her for her children's sake, if not for his, to 'put away her adulteries from between her breasts,' lest the fire of his jealousy break out on her and them alike (ii. 2ff.).[1] But she remained obdurate to his appeals, and attached herself openly to her paramour, sinking ever more deeply into the mire of sin, until she became a common drudge, and was exposed on the market-place for the price of a slave. The sight of her degradation kindled the old passion in Hosea's breast. He had loved this woman in her innocence; he loved her, if possible, with a purer affection in her shame. He could not bear to think of her as the slave of evil men, and with his own hand bought her of her masters, to keep her awhile in some sequestered place, where she might think, and come to herself, and realize how much better it was when she reposed in her own husband's affection, and then bring her back to his home, that they might once more enjoy the sacred intimacies of the happy days of old (iii. 1ff.).[2]

This new feeling towards his repentant wife Hosea likewise transfers to God. In his revulsion against her infidelity he had pictured Israel as the faithless bride of Jahweh, who had gone after her

[1] In the appeal to Israel we may legitimately trace a reflection of the prophet's personal appeal to his erring wife.

[2] I have here followed the interpretation of Hosea's tragedy

lovers the Baalim, and committed whoredom with them on all the high places of the land, and must therefore be stripped of her goodly things, and exposed like an adulteress on the dry and barren desert (ii. 6ff.). But now a new sense of the 'Everlasting Mercy' dawns on him. The impulse to redeem the fallen one was of God, and reflected His own love for Israel. Yet more tenderly than Hosea over his fallen wife did Jahweh brood over Israel, nor could He find rest or peace of mind till He had restored her to honour. In her hour of bitter shame, when her other lovers had cast her off, Jahweh would lure her to the desert where He had first betrothed her to Him, and would speak

first suggested by Ewald, and developed by Wellhausen (*Kleine Propheten*[3], pp. 105ff.) and Robertson Smith (*Prophets of Israel*, pp. 178ff.), which alone appears to do justice alike to the moral sensibilities of the prophet and to his conception of Israel as Jahweh's bride, innocent, fallen and restored. I have departed from these scholars, however, in placing the discovery of Gomer's guilt, not about the time of Lo-ruhamah's birth, but shortly before the breaking up of the home, after the birth of all three children. There is no definite proof of the earlier date; and it seems an outrage on the pure and sensitive conscience of Hosea—before he had fathomed the depths of Divine love—to imagine him for three long years meekly enduring his wife's infidelity. The grave moral tone of ii. 6ff. appears also to point to a time when Hosea has lost all hope of present repentance, and foresees salvation for Israel only at the price of exile. For other ways of reading Hosea i.–iii. compare Davidson's article in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii., pp. 421f.; also J. M. P. Smith, *The Prophet and his Problems* (1914), where a fresh and forceful defence is offered of the most literal reading of the story as the prophet's marriage with a woman whom he knew to be a harlot.

love-words to her heart, opening 'a door of hope' in the very valley of Achor where she had begun her career of adultery (Josh. vii. 26); and so soon as she responded to His affection He would betroth her anew to Him in faithfulness and truth, and lead her back to His land, and make her and her children a blessing in the world.[1]

Therefore, lo! I will allure her,
And will lead her to the desert, and will speak to her heart;
And I will give her back her vineyards,
And will make the valley of Achor a door of hope.

And she shall respond to me there as in the days of her youth,
Even the day that I brought her up from the land of Egypt;
And I will betroth her to me for ever in love and compassion,
I will betroth her to me in truth and the knowledge of Jahweh.[2]

And it shall be on that day, saith Jahweh,
She shall call to her husband, and call no more to the Baalim.
And I will remove from her mouth the names of the Baalim,
And they shall be mentioned no more by their names.

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[1] The verses which turn the darkness of chap. ii. into the light of redemption are often assigned to the post-exilic period, when men's thoughts were fixed on a future of undimmed glory for Israel. No doubt the rhythm and key are different from Hosea's usual note—the prophecy being rather an idyllic meditation than a spoken word to Israel—but on the theory accepted here it is the natural outcome of the prophet's personal experience and attitude towards Gomer. Only in i. 5, 7; i. 10–ii. 1 (which clearly presuppose the Exile) and the reference to 'David their king' in iii. 5 do we catch the accent of a later age.

[2] I have transferred *vv.* 19f. (stripped of slight excrescences) to its natural place in the poem.

And I will make her a covenant with the beasts of the field,
With the fowl of heaven and the creeping things of the ground;
And bow and sword and war will I break from the land,
And will make her to lie down in safety.

And it shall be on that day, saith Jahweh,
I will call to the heavens, and they shall call to the earth;
And the earth shall call to the corn and the wine and the oil,
And they shall echo the call [1] *of Jezreel.*

And I will sow him (Jezreel) for me in the land,
And will love the Unloved one (Lo-ruhamah);
And will say to Lo-ammi, 'Thou art my people,'
And he shall say, 'My God' (ii. 14–23).

The wooing was all in vain. Israel responded not to Jahweh's words of love. Thus there was no return to the home-land: the place of exile became the people's grave. But the message of Hosea was not in vain. From Israel it passed to Judah, and found a richer expression in prophets like Jeremiah and the preacher of Comfort (Isa. xl.–lv.). And in Jesus Christ the love of God which spoke through him became incarnate. Hosea's glory is that he approached so nearly the great mystery of redemption. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John iv. 10).

[1] The verb used throughout is עָנָה, *answer, respond,* here in the sense of responsive singing. Nature forms, as it were, a grand symphony, in which the note of Jezreel—*God will sow*—peals forth from heaven to earth, and is caught up by all the fruits of earth. In more sober prose, God commands the clouds to drop their rain, and the whole land of Israel is filled with fertility and joy.

CHAPTER V

The Vision of Isaiah

OUR study of the earlier prophets has brought out incidentally the predominance of North Israel during the middle regal period. The defection of the ten tribes was no mere lopping off from the commonwealth of Israel; it seemed almost as if the head had been transferred. For centuries the real interest centred in the North. On the Moabite and Assyrian monuments it is the house of Omri and Jehu that plays the conspicuous part; Judah is a mere appendage. The same impression is conveyed by the record in Kings, notwithstanding its Jewish sympathies. The kings of Israel are condemned for their evil deeds, yet they are the real heroes of history, while the kings of Judah flit across the stage as under-studies. In religion, too, the Northland displayed the greater activity. It might be zeal 'without knowledge,' but the fact remains that to all outward appearance Israel showed the most living interest in the cause of Jahweh. With this goes the further striking fact that prophetic activity was then

almost exclusively confined to the North. Of the older prophets, Elijah, Elisha and Hosea were all sons of the North ; the only Judean was Amos, and even his prophecy was directed against Israel, at the chief centres of her national life.

It was well for Judah, however, that she remained so long in the background. Had she been more immersed in stirring activities, the life-strength of the nation might have been sapped in infancy. As it was, the legitimate kingdom of David was able slowly to consolidate itself. To this end the South offered inestimable advantages : a fixed centre for its national and religious development in the holy city of Jerusalem, a succession of kings of David's line, good and bad, indeed, as in the North, yet not so notoriously corrupt as Ahab or Jehu, and a fairly consistent policy of government. Thus Judah escaped the constant revolutions that drained the blood of the Northern nation, and in large measure also the wars which exhausted the manhood of the people. By her relative isolation, too, Judah maintained much of her moral and spiritual purity. There were, no doubt, grievous wounds and sores, but corruption had not so deeply infected the heart of the people. Thus we hear little of Baal-worship, with its unspeakable abominations, in the Southern kingdom. The good old traditions that had made the people great kept a firmer hold there : the leaven of righteousness still continued to leaven the lump.

At last the time came when Judah also stepped forward on the stage of history. The reign of Uzziah (*c.* 790-740 B.C.) was practically contemporaneous with that of Jeroboam the Great in Israel, and the one vied with the other in glory. The historical books record Uzziah's victories over the Philistines, Arabs, and other enemies on the Southern border of Judah, his recovery of the seaport Elath on the Red Sea, which gave him access to the riches of Arabia and the East, his great name over all that region, his building of fortresses in the wilderness, with cisterns for the cattle and husbandmen whose labours he encouraged so zealously, and his strengthening of the defences of Jerusalem by towers and battlements (2 Kings xiv. 22; 2 Chron. xxvi. 6ff.), while the pages of prophecy bear witness to the vast increase of wealth and material splendour which accompanied these military achievements (cf. Isa. iii. 16ff.; v. 8ff.; Mic. ii. 1ff., etc.). In the eyes of his subjects, therefore, Uzziah must have appeared a second Solomon, raised up to restore the fortunes of Jerusalem. The ignominious death of so illustrious a ruler, followed within a few years by the accession of his weak and vacillating grandson Ahaz, dealt a rough blow to the national hope. But the crisis drew forth the first great prophet of Judah, a man whose commanding personality dominated the whole life of the nation for forty epoch-making years.

With Isaiah we enter upon a new phase of prophecy. Amos had delivered his awesome message, and then returned to his flocks and fig-trees in the desert, appealing to future generations only by his written word. Hosea had lived among his people, striving by alternate entreaties and warnings to bring them to a better mind, but he appears to have exerted no direct influence on national politics. Isaiah not merely spoke in the name of his God, but he put forth hand and authority to make Israel —or at least the godly kernel of the nation—a true Kingdom of the Holy One. Ahaz and Hezekiah might fill the throne; but Isaiah was the real ruler of Jahweh's heritage. And the future of the nation was largely determined by the ideals of national life and government set forth by the prophet.

The call of Isaiah is in fine keeping with his kingly spirit. It is suggestively enough associated with the death of the Grand Monarch, whose long and prosperous reign had shed such lustre on Jerusalem. In a striking lecture Professor A. B. Davidson has pictured the patriotic young Jew, deeply moved by the tragedy of Uzziah's end, joining with the mournful throngs that filled the palace to pay the last tribute of respect before the bier of the dead sovereign, and then passing to the Temple, to render homage to another King, whose sceptre could never fall from stricken hands.[1] More likely it was just

[1] *The Called of God*, pp. 187ff.

before the tragedy had closed in darkness, but when the weight of it hung heavy on earnest souls. At all events, the scene of the Vision was the Temple door-way. Isaiah had gone to worship; and, as he prayed, the outward symbolism of worship vanished, and the eternal realities themselves were unveiled before his spiritual imagination. In the holy place, where the Ark stood as the emblem of the Divine, he now saw the Lord Jahweh seated as King upon a throne 'high and lifted up,' beyond all contact with human imperfection and sin, the skirts of His flowing robes filling the Temple—in other words, His royal presence permeating the sanctuary and going out thence to bless and gladden the world. Around His throne the choirs that pealed out their joyous music in the Temple seemed now transformed into shining companies of seraphim, whose voices were raised in responsive chorus:

Holy, holy, holy is Jahweh of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory[1] (vi. 3).

But not by lip alone did these bright spirits minister to their King. Each one had six wings—two to cover his face, in token of reverence, two to cover his 'feet' (the lower parts of his body), a delicate suggestion of purity, and two for flight, to speed on His Divine commissions 'o'er land and ocean without rest'—the three pairs thus finely symbolizing

[1] 'Glory is the expression of holiness, as beauty is the expression of health.'—G. A. Smith, *the Book of Isaiah*, i. 68.

the threefold worship that God loves and expects of His children—reverence, purity and service. The sight of such transcendent holiness Isaiah could not yet endure. In his nervous dread the very foundations of the threshold seemed to shake beneath him, and a great cloud arose to obstruct his gaze—the darkness of his own impurity showing thick and black before the dazzling radiance of God's glory. And for the moment he felt himself undone. 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell amidst a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, even Jahweh of hosts' (*v.* 5).

Conviction of sin may pierce the heart of the prodigal in the far country, when he comes to himself, and feels how sorely he has wounded the Father's heart by his shameful vices. But it comes also—and with yet more overwhelming force—to such as have kept themselves free from 'the great transgression,' but have caught some vision of God's holiness, in the light of which they can read aright the secret of their own souls. Isaiah's despairing cry is like that of Peter, when he first clearly discerned the Divine majesty of his Master: 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' In spite of his instant conviction of unworthiness, and his fear lest he should be undone amid those 'everlasting burnings' where the Almighty dwelt, he longed with all his heart to join the sacred choirs that sang God's

praises in the Temple ; his highest ambition was to worship Him, as they did, with mingled reverence, purity and service. And the God who sees not as man sees, but who looks into the heart, granted the young enthusiast his desire. ' Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a glow stone in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar : and he touched my mouth with it '—thus conveying to him the purifying, consecrating influence of the Divine holiness—' and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips ; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged ' (*v.* 7). At once the trembling figure, who had fallen prostrate before God's presence, conscious of nothing beyond his personal meanness and corruption, could rise to his feet in the dignity of manhood and enter the service of the Holy One towards whom his whole being rose in earnest aspiration. His ministry was not confined to the adoration of angelic hosts in heaven. His will must be made known to men, and His Kingdom carried forward in triumph through the world ; and for this service He needed the devoted loyalty of human hearts and voices. ' Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ? ' Obedient to the Divine appeal Isaiah answered, ' Here am I ; send me ' (*v.* 8).

CHAPTER VI

Isaiah the Prophet of Holiness

We have already seen how the prophet's call struck the key-note of his subsequent activity. The conviction of impending doom which was borne home on Amos in the solitude of the desert formed the burden of his preaching at Samaria and Bethel. Hosea's sympathy with the loving heart of Jahweh which he learned through the violated sanctities of his home life made him the herald of salvation. Isaiah was as clearly called to be the prophet of holiness. His task was to make the vision of God's holiness as real and effective in the national life as it had proved in his own. To the ancient mind holiness meant primarily *separation*. God was holy in the sense of being separate from men—infinitely exalted above human imperfection, weakness and transience [1]—and His holy ones were those set apart or 'consecrated' to His service. In itself, therefore, holiness had no ethical import. It might even be the handmaid of gross immorality, the

[1] Holiness is thus virtually the equivalent of transcendence. 'It describes God's transcendent majesty, His absolute Godhead' (A. B. Davidson, *The Called of God*, p. 192).

temple prostitutes of heathen religions being known as 'holy men and women.' The filling of the concept with ethical significance is one result of prophetic teaching, and arose directly from the prophets' thought of God. Hosea had already identified holiness with love: to his generous heart Jahweh was the Holy One of Israel in His mercy and forgiveness (Hos. xi. 9). Isaiah gave a new turn to the idea. For him holiness was that absolute purity of heart and life which glows like consuming fire, and in whose presence no uncleanness or corruption can abide. Jahweh had revealed Himself to Isaiah in this light; and to all who listened to his preaching he held up the same mirror of holiness. The ideal is already defined in the opening chapter, where holiness is the correlate, not of Sabbath-keeping, worship and sacrifice, but of justice and humanity.[1]

What care I for the multitude of your sacrifices?
Jahweh doth say.
I am sated with offerings of rams,
And the fat of fed beasts;
In the blood of bullocks and he-goats
I take no delight.

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[1] It is now generally recognized that ch. i. is no single 'Great Arraignment' (Ewald), but a series of separate oracles. Of these, *vv.* 2–9 belong almost certainly to the critical period of Sennacherib's invasion. The rest of the chapter is usually assigned to the same date; but the general outlook of *vv.* 10–17, the hope of forgiveness that still shines through *vv.* 18–20, and the dependence of *vv.* 21–26 on Hosea, rather suggest an earlier origin. At all events, we have here the clearest exposition of Isaiah's ideal of holiness.

When ye come to behold my face,
Who seeketh this at your hand?
So trample my courts no more,
For vain are oblations!

An abhorrence to me is the smoke (of your sacrifices),
Your holy days iniquity;[1]
New Moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies,
I cannot away with.

Your feast days and festivals
My soul doth hate;
They are a burden upon me—
I am weary of bearing them.

So when ye spread out your hands,
I will hide mine eyes from you;
Even when ye multiply your prayers,
I will not listen.

Your hands are full of bloodshed:
Wash yourselves clean!
Put away the evil of your doings
From before mine eyes!

Cease to do evil, learn to do well,
Pursue after justice!
Set right the oppressor, judge the fatherless,
Plead the cause of the widow! (i. 11–17).

In these stern words of justice we may catch the echo of Amos; but a new note is heard in Isaiah, one that links him in spirit with Hosea and later prophets of mercy. If holiness were only strict justice, purity of heart and goodness, it would defeat its own end, crushing beneath an intolerable

[1] I have divided the lines according to the LXX, an arrangement necessary to preserve the elegiac measure. The closing words, וַעֲצָרָה אָוֶן (thus transposed), I have treated as the parallel to קְטֹרֶת תּוֹעֵבָה הִיא לִי.

burden the soul that pursued it: the quest of holiness, indeed, would result in despair. Thus Divine holiness must come down to seek and to save the lost. In his vision of the Holy One, Isaiah had found forgiving grace as real an element in God's holiness as consuming purity; and because of that he was able to stand with boldness in the presence of the Eternal, and to go forth as the ambassador of holiness. This side likewise has its due place in his preaching.

Come now, let us be right with each other,
Jahweh doth say:

Though your sins be like scarlet,
They may be white as snow;
Though they be red like crimson,
They may become as wool.[1]

If ye be willing and obedient,
Ye shall eat the good of the land;
But if ye refuse and rebel,
The sword shall devour you.

For the mouth of Jahweh hath spoken it (*vv.* 18–20).

If Isaiah expected the people as a whole to be 'willing and obedient,' he was speedily disillusioned. Honest souls here and there gave heed to his words; but the main result of his preaching was to harden

[1] I have taken this stanza in the usual positive sense, which seems more suitable to the context, and also more in harmony with Isaiah's conception of holiness, than either the ironical or the interrogative sense preferred by many modern commentators. As against the latter alternative, cf. especially Burney, *Journal of Theological Studies*, xi. 433ff.

the people's heart. The more earnestly he pleaded with them, the more obtuse became their understanding, the duller their ears, and the more 'besmeared' their eyes; they heard, but could not understand; they saw, but perceived not (vi. 9f.). In spite of this, the prophet was led by Divine necessity to press on with his thankless task. The hardening of their hearts he felt to be involved in his call, a real part of the burden Jahweh had laid upon him.[1] If Israel were to become a holy people, it must be purged by the blast of judgment—the blast of God's fire—until nothing was left but the pure gold from the crucible, or the stump of the terebinth felled to the ground (*vv.* 11–13).[2]

While the fire of God's holiness was to sweep over Israel as a whole, its fiercest flames were focussed on Jerusalem, the centre of offence. The moral situation which here confronted Isaiah closely resembled that in Samaria. Increase of wealth

[1] As ch. vi. is prefatory to the second group of prophecies, and was therefore not written till the close of the Syro-Ephraimitic war (*c.* 733 B.C.), it is natural to suppose that the account of the call has been coloured to some extent by reflection on subsequent experience. Skinner, however, insists that 'we have no right to imagine' any such influence (*Cambridge Bible on Isaiah*, p. 43). In any case, the words convey the effect, rather than the substance, of the prophet's preaching.

[2] The closing words of *v.* 13 are a later addition, not found in LXX. They are, however, an accurate interpretation of the text. Isaiah must have taught his doctrine of the 'Remnant' from the beginning of his ministry, as his son Shear-Jashub was able to accompany him on his visit to Ahaz in 735 B.C.

bred luxury and riot. The rich sat long at their feasts, inflamed with wine and strong drink, while their ladies tripped gaily along, arrayed in all the bravery of their fine dress and jewellery, regardless of the doing of Jahweh and the needs of the people (iii. 16ff.). The very troubles of the poor were made the occasion of their own aggrandisement. Brilliant as Uzziah's victories had been, they were purchased at the cost of the peasant's independence. The land that had passed down from father to son—the 'portion' which the poor man valued as highly as his life—was thrown into the market, and the larger proprietors added field to field, and house to house, till there was no room left for others. Here too the inequalities of wealth led to the wresting of the poor man's rights. It seemed as if many of the social leaders in Israel had lost the sense of right and wrong. They called evil good, and good evil; darkness light, and light darkness. They harnessed themselves to evil as with wagon-ropes, and actually defied God to show His working. 'Let Him speed on, hasten His work, that we may see it; let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!' (v. 8ff.).

Though a loyal son of Jerusalem, an aristocrat by birth and bearing, a friend of the wealthier classes, with easy access to the palace, Isaiah was as full of sympathy for the poor, and righteous wrath

against the follies and wickedness of the rich, as the democratic Amos had been ; and with the same fiery passion he depicts the smelting of Jerusalem in the furnace.

Ah ! fallen to a harlot
Is the faithful city —
Zion, that was full of justice,
Where righteousness dwelt !
Thy silver is become dross,
Thy pure wine mixed ;
Thy princes are rebels,
And associates of thieves.
Each one of them loveth bribes,
And pursueth rewards ;
They judge not the fatherless,
And the cause of the widow comes not unto them.

Therefore thus saith Jahweh,
The Mighty One of Israel :
Ah ! how I will ease me of mine adversaries,
And avenge me of mine enemies !
I will turn my hand upon thee,
(And will kindle fire against thee ;)
I will smelt out thy dross in the furnace,
And remove all thine alloy.
Then will I restore thy judges as at the first,
And thy counsellors as at the beginning
And afterward shalt thou be called the Township of Justice,
The Faithful City [1] (i. 21–26).

In a much more splendid utterance he describes the coming of the Day of Jahweh against the pomp

[1] The radiant picture of Zion as the exalted centre of a world at peace (Isa. ii. 1–4 = Mic. iv. 1–4) is clearly intended as the climax to this vision of a New Jerusalem ; but the thought and language alike point to a date soon after the Restoration, rather than the times of Isaiah and Micah. Cf. the Commentaries of G. B. Gray, Wade, etc.

and pride of Jerusalem—the silver and gold, the horses and chariots of war, the proud galleons that brought the city her wealth, even the cedars and oaks and mountains—whatsoever exalted itself against the holy majesty of Jahweh.

Go ye into the caves of the rock,
And hide yourselves in the holes of the dust,
From before the terror of Jahweh,
And before His glorious majesty![1]
For Jahweh hath forsaken His people,
He hath cast off the household of Jacob;[2]
For their land is filled with traffickers,[3]
And hands they strike with the children of aliens;
Their land also is filled with silver and gold,
And there is no end to their treasures;
Their land also is filled with horses,
And there is no end to their chariots;
Their land also is filled with idols,
And there is no end to their images:[4]
They worship the work of their hands,
Even that which their fingers have made.
So the pride of man shall sink low,
And the loftiness of man shall be abased;
And Jahweh alone shall be exalted,
While the idols shall one and all vanish.[5]

Go ye into the caves of the rock,
And hide yourselves in the holes of the dust,

---

[1] The opening lines are recovered from *vv.* 19 and 21, compared with the parallel *v.* 10.

[2] It is necessary here to read the 3rd pers. (with LXX), and to fill in some such parallel as the above.

[3] I have followed G. B. Gray in reading כְּנַעֲנִים *Canaanites*, i.e. *traders*, for עֹנְנִים, *soothsayers*, which is quite out of place here. The line will then run, כִּי מָלְאָה אַרְצוֹ כְּנַעֲנִים (cf. LXX).

[4] Add the parallel וְאֵין קֵצֶה לְעֲצֻבוֹתָיו (Duhm, etc.).

[5] The full text is secured from the refrain in *vv.* 17*f.*

From before the terror of Jahweh,
And before His glorious majesty!
For Jahweh of Hosts hath a Day,
The Lord hath a time for judgment,[1]
On all that is proud and lofty,
And on all that is high and uplifted —
On all the cedars of Lebanon,
And on all the oaks of Bashan;
On all the lofty mountains,
And on all uplifted hills;
On every lordly tower,
And on every fenced wall;
On all the ships of Tarshish,
And on all the stately galleons.[2]
So the pride of man shall sink low,
And the loftiness of man shall be abased;
And Jahweh alone shall be exalted,
While the idols shall one and all vanish (ii. 6–18).

The influence of Amos may still be felt here, but there is a unique majesty in Isaiah's tones—the majesty of one haunted by the vision of the Divine holiness. The sweep of his imagination is sublime; and the diction is as lordly as the thought. The phrasing is carefully finished, and the verse moves on with a stately rhythm, strong, full, yet always under command. With the same royal ease the young prophet can wield the weapons of satire, as when he pierces the pride of the 'daughters of Jerusalem,' who hold themselves so haughtily,

And walk with outstretched neck,
And ogling with their eyes;
Mincing ever as they walk,
And jingling with their feet,

[1] Here too the parallel line is necessary.
[2] Read סְפִינוֹת (cf. Jon. i. 6).

only to have their perfume turned to rottenness and their girdle exchanged for a rope, their well-dressed hair made baldness and their stately robes replaced by sackcloth (iii. 16ff.).[1] But his loftiest scorn is reserved for the careless rich who devour the needy, the land-grabbers and the topers, the moral perverts and the scoffing.

Ah! they that join house to house,
And lay field to field—
Till there be no more room [2]
In the midst of the land!
Thus Jahweh of Hosts
Hath sworn in mine ears:
'Of a surety many a house
Shall become a desolation—
Even houses great and goodly,
Without inhabitant.
For ten acres of vineyard
Shall yield but one bath;
And an homer of seed
Shall yield but an ephah.' [3]

Ah! the heroes for drinking wine,
And the valiant in mingling strong drink,[4]

---

[1] Into the genuine poetic texture of this piece has been inserted a detailed inventory of articles of women's dress, invaluable from the archæological point of view, but purely prosaic (*vv.* 18–23).

[2] The added words וְהוּשַׁבְתֶּם לְבַדְּכֶם mar the elegiac quality of the verse.

[3] Though Isaiah is condemning landed monopoly from the religious standpoint, he has a keen eye for its economic results as well. Monopoly leads surely to depopulation and waste of resources. Economic conditions in modern Europe afford a striking commentary on Isaiah's analysis.

[4] I have transferred to this position *v.* 22, which is quite out of place in its present context.

They that rise up early of mornings
To follow after strong drink,
That tarry late in the twilight,
Till wine doth inflame them —
Whose feasts are lute and harp,
Timbrel and flute and wine,
But the doing of Jahweh they heed not,
And the work of His hands they regard not.
Therefore my people are exiled,
Exiled for lack of knowledge;
Their nobles are famished with hunger,
And their rabble parched with thirst.

* * *
* * *

Therefore Sheol hath enlarged her desire,
And opened her mouth without measure;
And down go her splendour and rabble,
Her pomp, and all that rejoice therein: [1]
And lambs shall graze (on her site) as their pasture,
And fatlings shall feed 'mong the ruins.

Ah! they that draw guilt with bullock thongs,
And sin as with cart ropes —
That say, 'Let Him speed on,
Hasten His work, that we may see it;
Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel
Draw nigh and come, that we may know it!'

Ah! they that call evil good,
And good evil;
That put darkness for light,
And light for darkness;
That put bitter for sweet,
And sweet for bitter!

Ah! they that are wise in their own eyes,
And in their own sight knowing;

---

[1] The feminine refers most probably to Zion; the missing introduction to this 'Woe' will thus no doubt have marked out the capital for God's vengeance. On the other hand, *vv.* 15f. are wrongly inserted from ch. ii.

That acquit the wicked in return for a bribe,
And the rights of the innocent wrest from him![1]

* * *
* * *

Therefore, as tongue of fire devoureth the stubble,
And hay sinketh down in the flame,
Their root shall become as rottenness,
And their blossom shall rise as dust;
For they have scorned the teaching of Jahweh of hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel (v. 8–24).

At times the prophet's anger melts into a tenderness like that of Hosea. Thus his picture of the coming anarchy in Judah is full of pathos.

For behold! the Lord,
Even Jahweh of hosts,
Doth remove from Jerusalem and Judah
Both stay and staff—
The hero and man of war,
The judge and prophet and elder,
The man of renown and the counsellor,
The skilled in magic and expert in charms.[2]
And youths will He give for their princes,
And capricious babes shall rule them;
And the people shall wax tyrannous man over man,
Each man over his neighbour;
And rude shall they be, the youth to the elder,
And the churl to the noble.

When a man layeth hold of his fellow,
In whose father's house is a mantle,
(*Saying*), '*Come, our chief shalt thou be,*
And this heap of ruins shall be under thy hand'—

---

[1] These closing 'Woes' are without their sequel. The text may be considerably mutilated. Even between this stanza and the following there is a hiatus.

[2] Instead of cutting out these four lines as a prosaic interpretation of the 'staff and stay' (G. B. Gray), I have omitted two superfluous details which mar the rhythm, leaving the rest as it stands.

On that day shall he lift up his voice,
Saying, 'I will not be an healer:
For in my house there is neither bread nor mantle,
Ye shall not make me chief of the people.'
For Jerusalem hath stumbled,
And Judah is fallen:
For their tongue and their deeds are against the Lord,
[illegible] eyes of His glory;
[illegible] persons hath witnessed against them,
[illegible] ve they published and hid not.
[illegible] are their tyrants,
[illegible] them;[1]
[illegible] aders mislead thee,
[illegible] he way of thy paths.
Woe unto them!
For ill have they done themselves.[2]
Lo! Jahweh standeth to plead,
Upriseth to judge His people —
Jahweh doth enter on judgment
With His people's elders and princes:
'It is ye that have eaten the vineyard,
The plunder of the poor is in your houses!
What mean ye that ye crush my people,
And grind the faces of the poor?' (iii. 1–15).

The most exquisite expression is given to Isaiah's feeling for Judah, however, in his 'love-song' of the Vineyard.

Now let me sing for my loved one
A love-song touching His vineyard.

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[1] We may, however, take מְעוֹלֵל as *acting the child*, and for נָשִׁים read נֹשִׁים (with LXX), thus rendering:

My people—their tyrants deal wantonly,
And exactors of usury rule them.

[2] Read בַּלּוּ (LXX).

[3] I have transferred *v.* 9*b* to what seems its natural place in the context, and omitted *vv.* 10f. as a clear instance of marginal comment.

My loved One had a vineyard
On a fertile peak :[1]
And He digged it, and cleared it of stones,
And did plant it with vines ;
He built a tower in the midst of it,
And hewed out a wine-fat ;
And he looked for a yield of grapes,
But it yielded wildings.

And now, ye inhabitants of Jerusalem,
And men of Judah,
Judge for yourselves, I pray,
Between me and my vineyard !
What more could be done for my vineyard,
Than that which I did ?
When I looked, then, for yield of grapes,
Why yielded it wildings ?

So now let me show you, I pray,
What I will do with my vineyard :
I will pluck down its hedge, and it shall be devoured,
I will break through its walls, and it shall be down-trodden.
I will make it a waste, unpruned and unhoed,
That shall spring up with briars and thorns ;
And the clouds will I command,
That they rain no rain thereon.

For the vineyard of Jahweh of hosts is the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah the planting in which He delighted ;
And He looked for the word of justice, but behold ! the sword of injustice,
For right, but behold ! the cry of the wronged[2] (v. 1–7).

Though his heart is with Judah, the sovereign eye of the prophet ranges over the Northland too. He knows the tumults and disorders that prevail in the

[1] קֶרֶן בֶּן־שָׁמֶן, lit. *a horn, the son of oil.*

[2] I have sought thus to reproduce the effect of the plays on מִשְׁפָּט, *judgment*, and מִשְׁפָּח, *bloodshed*, צְדָקָה, *righteousness*, and צְעָקָה, *a cry.*

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midst of the nation, the lust and pride, the violence and oppression and crime ; and he knows that doom is near. Thus in the most powerfully dramatic of all his oracles he unrolls the swift march of judgment, through cycle after cycle of disaster—invasion, defeat and slaughter, the loss of territory and the horrors of civil war—till the tragedy reaches its close amid the thunders of the Assyrian conquest (ix. 8–21 ; v. 26–29).[1]

A word hath the Lord sent into Jacob,
And it lighteth on Israel ;
And the people all shall know it,
Even Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,—
Those that have spoken in pride
And the stoutness of their heart, and said :

---

[1] That ix. 8–21 belongs to the same context as v. 26–29 has long been evident to scholars : the latter forms the necessary climax to the tragedy, and the appearance of the refrain in v. 25 is further evidence of their unity. The opening stanza of ch. x. is clearly intended to fit into the same framework ; but the hortatory tone of the verses connects them rather with the 'Woes' of ch. v. A mutilated stanza of the prophecy may also be found in v. 25 ; but the context here is so broken, and the following verses are so clearly the sequel to the picture of civil war in ix. 18ff., that it seems better to regard these touches as redactional. The alternation of tenses throughout the poem has raised a further question as to the prophet's outlook. Ewald, Kuenen, Cheyne, G. A. Smith, Skinner, Wade and other scholars regard the prophecy as mainly a survey of past calamities, the Assyrian invasion being the only judgment still to come ; on the other hand, Duhm, Marti, Driver, Whitehouse and G. B. Gray read the whole as predictive of future events. The present writer decidedly accords with the latter view. He has translated the verbs, however, as pictorial presents, to bring out the full vividness of the Hebrew prophetic perfect.

'The bricks are fallen, but with hewn stone will we build;
The sycomores are cut down, but with cedars will we replace them'[1]
Therefore doth Jahweh raise the foeman against them,
And spurreth on their enemies,
Aram on the East, and the Philistines behind,
Devouring Israel with open mouth.
For all this His anger is not turned back,
But His hand is stretched out still.

The people return not to Him that smote them,
Nor seek after Jahweh of Hosts;
So He cutteth from Israel both head and tail,
Palm-branch and reed in a single day.[2]

* * *
* * *

He spareth not their choice young men,
Nor pitieth their orphans and widows;
Because each one is godless and ill-doing,
And every mouth speaketh folly.
For all this His anger is not turned back,
But His hand is stretched out still.

Their wickedness burns like a fire,
Which consumeth briars and thorns,
Then kindleth the forest groves,
And they roll up in pillars of smoke.
Through the wrath of Jahweh the land is ablaze,
And the people are food for the flames.
They carve on the right hand, but are hungry still;
They devour on the left, but are not satisfied,
No man spareth his brother,
But each devoureth his neighbour's flesh,
Manasseh Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh,
While together they rise against Judah.

---

[1] Duhm suggests that this couplet may be derived from a popular song of the time. In any case, the words nobly express the invincible confidence of the people, even in the hour of defeat and disaster.

[2] The two following verses in the Hebrew text are clearly a prosaic gloss, which has perhaps displaced the original sequel. This stanza is two couplets shorter than the others.

For all this His anger is not turned back,
But His hand is stretched out still.

So he raiseth a signal for a nation afar,
He doth whistle him hither from the end of the earth.
And, lo! swiftly he cometh, with speed,
In his ranks none weary or stumbling;
No girdle unloosed on his loins,
No thong for his sandals snapped.
His arrows are sharpened,
His bows are all bent;
His horses' hoofs are as flint,
As the whirlwind his wheels are accounted.
His roar is as that of a lion,
Like young lions he roareth and growleth;
He seizeth the prey, and sweepeth it off,
And there is none to deliver.[1]

[1] Of all modern poets Milton comes nearest to Isaiah in sublimity and splendour, combined with classical restraint and conciseness. They are akin, too, in moral dignity—in their insistence that both personal and national life be judged as it appears in the 'great Task-Master's eye,' and that whatever fails to stand that test must perish.

CHAPTER VII

The Sign of Immanuel

ISAIAH has thus far confined himself to general application of religious principles ; but the time came for him to play a more direct part in the affairs of Israel, and therewith to emphasize the positive side of holiness.

Since the death of Uzziah, the Assyrian peril had become increasingly acute. Menahem had purchased but a brief respite ; and the forces of Tiglath-Pileser were mustering for a mightier assault on the West. The common danger drew the lesser powers together. A defensive alliance was formed between the ancient rivals, Rezin king of Damascus and Pekah the usurping king of Israel. If a strong stand were to be made against the invader, it was necessary that Judah also should be brought into line. Jotham refused ; and the allied kings bent their first energies to his humiliation. Ere the blow could be struck, Jotham died, leaving the government in the hands of his son Ahaz (735 B.C.). The weakness of the new reign became evident from the first. Edomite bands swooped down on Elath, the

port on the Red Sea which Uzziah had taken and fortified, thus destroying the maritime power of Judah at one blow. The enemy was quick to press his advantage. Syrian troops were thrown into Israel, and arms joined for a frontal attack on Jerusalem. The capital won by storm, Ahaz was to be replaced by a favourite of Rezin's, the nameless 'son of Tabeal,' and Judah made tributary to the allies. Ahaz was no man to face an emergency like this. When he heard the dismal news, 'his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest are moved before the wind.' He made a brave appearance of inspecting the defences and water supplies of Jerusalem, as though he meant to hold out to the last; but in his own mind he had already planned to shirk the path of duty, and had in fact sent a secret embassage to Tiglath-Pileser, praying him to come and save him, and cravenly signing himself, 'Thy servant and thy son' (2 Kings xvi. 6f.).

The people of Jerusalem were too servile to offer any opposition to this suicidal policy. Only Isaiah dared to stand up in condemnation. The interview between prophet and king marks another of those decisive moments in the history of religion. It took place 'at the end of the conduit from the upper reservoir,' the most critical point in the defences of the city, and probably the very spot whence Rabshakeh was to hurl his insults against the people

of Jahweh, some forty years later. No scene could be more fittingly associated with Isaiah's great words of faith and cheer. 'Take heed, and keep quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, for these two stumps of smoking fire-brands!' They seem now full of fire and fury; but thus saith Jahweh, 'Their counsel shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass,' for behind them is nothing but upstart vanity.

The head of Syria is Damascus,
And the head of Damascus is Rezin;[1]
And the head of Ephraim is Samaria,
And the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah!

On the other side,

The head of Judah is Jerusalem,
And the head of Jerusalem is Jahweh of hosts.[2]

If Ahaz and his people will only put their trust in Him, they shall never be put to confusion. But

If ye will not believe,
Ye shall not be established[3] (Isa. vii. 8ff.).

In this heroic sentence we have faith for the first time set forth as the staying principle of life. God

[1] The intervening clause is an evident gloss, applying the prophet's warning to the colonization of Samaria by Esarhaddon, *c.* 670 B.C.

[2] This couplet does not appear in the text, and may never have been spoken; but it expresses what was undoubtedly in Isaiah's mind.

[3] The paranomasia in the original is finely brought out in G. A. Smith's paraphrase, 'If ye have not faith, ye cannot have staith' (*The Book of Isaiah*, i. 106).

is the King Eternal and Almighty; therefore the people that trusts in Him becomes partner in His might, and is more than a match for every hostile power, while those who place reliance on their own selfish and wayward policies must come to nought. Isaiah meant not to condemn such reasonable plans of defence as Ahaz was apparently busied with—for faith is in perfect harmony with wisdom and a sound mind. What he despised as so utterly unworthy of a child of faith was the foolish panic to which Ahaz had given way, and his equally foolish, and far more fatal, surrender of himself and his country to the Assyrians. In the eyes of the prophet, faith was the living fountain of manly courage and strength; unbelief was alike the deepest folly and the most contemptible weakness.

But Isaiah's faith was not exhausted even in this bold statement of principle. He was prepared to submit it to whatsoever test the king might impose. 'Ask thee a sign of Jahweh thy God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven,' and Jahweh will answer. And when the fickle king trifled with his great assurance—afraid to offend the Lord God of Israel, yet anxious that nothing should interfere with his treacherous purpose—Jahweh Himself gave a sign. 'Behold, a damsel (or young marriageable woman) shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us). For before the child shall have learned to refuse the evil and choose the

good (to distinguish the pleasant from the harmful and bad) the land before whose two kings thou tremblest shall be made desolate' (vii. 14, 16).[1]

The sign of Immanuel was for the king. But to impress his hope on the imagination of the people as well, Isaiah took a large tablet, or advertisement board, on which he wrote in common, legible characters, *L^{e}maher-shalal Hash-baz*, 'Of Swift-spoil, Speedy-prey,' and set it up on some conspicuous position in the city, explaining the force of the words to two responsible witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah (viii. 1f.). To a child born in his own home about a year afterwards he likewise gave the name of *Maher-shalal Hash-baz*,

[1] The traditional identification of Immanuel with the Messiah nas been revived in a new form by Gressmann, who regards the hope of Immanuel as part of the current eschatology of Israel, and ultimately derived from Babylonian sources (*op. cit.*, pp. 273ff.). But Gressmann's whole schematism rests on too many unproved assumptions to be relied on with confidence. On a natural reading of the prophecy the emphasis lies, not on the personality of either mother or child, but on the *name*, as symbolical of Jahweh's purpose for His people. And this purpose would appear to be salvation, not devastation and ruin, as G. A. Smith maintains (*The Book of Isaiah*, i. 114ff.). The very name עִמָּנוּ אֵל, *God with us*, indicates salvation. Besides, the prophecy stands in close connection with the sign of *Maher-shalal Hash-baz* and the oracle against Damascus and Samaria, both portending doom on Judah's enemies. The only verse which suggests the devastation of Judah (*v.* 15) reads like a forcible intrusion on the context, dependent on the later burden of prophecy in *vv.* 17ff. Compare A. S. Peake's illuminating art. in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, i. 782f.

as a pledge that ' before the child shall have learned to call *Abi, Immi*'—in our childish parlance *Dada, Mamma*—' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria ' (viii. 3f.).

To the coming doom of Syria and Ephraim the prophet devoted one of the most brilliant of his oracles, which must be assigned to the same critical period as the prophecies.

Lo ! Damascus is removed from being a city,
And shall become a ruin abandoned for ever ;
Her cities shall flocks possess—
They shall lie down, and none shall affray them.
The fortress shall pass from Ephraim,
And the kingdom from Damascus ;
And the remnant of Aram shall perish,
They shall be like the glory of the children of Israel.
The Rede of Jahweh of hosts.

On that day shall the glory of Jacob be minished,
And the fat of his flesh shall be lean :
It shall be as when reaper gathereth the crops,
And his arm reaps off the ears ; [1]
Or when (gardener) beateth an olive-tree,
And a gleaning is left thereon—
Two or three berries on the uppermost bough,
Four or five on the branches.
The Rede of Jahweh of hosts. [2]

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[1] The closing words of *v.* 5 are clearly an explanatory gloss.

[2] The omitted verses 7f. are now generally recognized as an interpolation. If original in the poem, they must be placed at the close (G. B. Gray) ; but the universal outlook would indicate a later authorship. On the other hand, *v.* 9 has awakened little suspicion. To the present writer, however, it seems to intrude uneasily into the imagery of the piece. Its excision,

Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation,
And hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength —
Although thou plantest thy plantings of Adonis,
And settest in vine-slips of an alien god,
And as soon as thou plantest thou makest them grow,
And by morning dost bring thy seedlings to blossom —
Yet the harvest shall fail on the day of thy sickness,
And of pain that cannot be cured.
The Rede of Jahweh of hosts (xvii. 1-11).

King and people still refused to listen, preferring to trust in their arm of flesh, the ruthless might of Assyria. Isaiah could thus do little more for them than witness to the hope he cherished by his name and those of his children.[1] But his real influence by no means waned during this period of eclipse. There had gathered around him a small circle of earnest souls—his 'learners' or disciples—whom he could instruct more perfectly in the knowledge of Jahweh, teaching them to fear Him and His word, and to dread not what the people called 'conspiracy.' And among them he 'bound' his testimony and 'sealed' his teaching,[2] while he himself waited

too, would yield us an equality of length in the separate stanzas, which is in keeping with the artistic quality of the whole.

[1] Isaiah, *The salvation of Jahweh*; Shear-jashub, *A remnant shall return*, or *be converted to Jahweh* (J. M. P. Smith suggests Shear-jesheb, *A remnant shall abide*); and Maher-shalal Hash-baz, *Swift-spoil, Speedy-prey* (of Damascus and Israel). Thus Isaiah and his children were 'signs and portents' of Judah's salvation.

[2] The absolute infinitive has occasioned considerable difficulty here. Its force is really that of an emphatic future: 'I will bind up the testimony and seal the teaching with my disciples,' etc. The binding and sealing of documents formed part of the ancient method of publication (cf. Cowley and Sayce's

patiently for Jahweh to reveal His purpose in season (viii. 11ff.).

In making this distinction between the general mass of the people and an elect company of disciples, like those whom Jesus was to gather around Him as the nucleus of His Kingdom, Isaiah took another decisive step forward, one prophetic of the essential freedom of the true-born children of faith. 'Till then no one had dreamed of a fellowship of faith dissociated from all national forms, maintained without the exercise of ritual services, bound together by faith in the Divine word alone. It was the birth of a new era in the Old Testament religion, for it was the birth of the conception of the *Church*, the first step in the emancipation of spiritual religion from the forms of political life—a step not less significant that all its consequences were not seen till centuries had passed away. The community of true religion and the political community of Israel had never before been separated even in thought; now they stood side by side, conscious of their mutual antagonism, and never again fully to fall back into their old identity.'[1]

edition of the Assouan papyri). The preposition בְּ, *with, among*, has been interpreted in different ways; but most probably it signifies *in* (*the heart of*), the binding and sealing being understood in a spiritual sense. Isaiah will thus foreshadow Jeremiah's law written upon the heart (Jer. xxxi. 33) and St. Paul's 'epistle of Christ, written . . . on tablets that are hearts of flesh' (2 Cor. iii. 3).

[1] W. R. Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 274f.

CHAPTER VIII

The Triumph of Isaiah's Faith

THE doom on Ephraim and Damascus was not long delayed. Isaiah's meeting with Ahaz must have taken place towards the close of 735 B.C., when Pekah and Rezin had begun their campaign against Judah. Within a year the hosts of Tiglath-Pileser had swept over Gilead, Asher, Zebulon and Naphtali, ravaging and depopulating, making a solitude and calling it peace. Though Samaria itself was spared for a season, the shadow of ignominious death never again rose from its brows. The punishment of Damascus was more summary. The Assyrian monuments allude to a pitched battle, in which Rezin was severely defeated, and 'fled alone for safety and crept secretly like a mouse into the gates of his city.' This was followed by the two years' siege of Damascus, ending with the sack of the city, the execution of Rezin, and the deportation of the people to Kir (2 Kings xvi. 9). Thus about the time when the child Immanuel had learned the rudiments of discretion, and Maher-shalal Hash-baz was prattling *Abi, Immi,* 'the riches of Damascus and the spoil

of Samaria were carried away before the king of Assyria.'

Yet neither king nor people gave praise to the Rock of their salvation. Ahaz imagined that his own astute policy had brought about his deliverance, while the people relied on their own senseless superstitions (Isa. viii. 19). The result was a further drawing off from Jahweh. An omen of evil soon appeared. Just after the fall of Damascus (732 B.C.) Ahaz went there to pay his allegiance to Tiglath-Pileser: seeing the altar on which the Great King offered sacrifice to his gods, he drew a plan of it, apparently with his own hand, and sent a copy to Uriah the priest, with instructions to have an exact replica made and placed in the Temple against his return; and on this he burnt sacrifices, and offered libations of blood and wine, as he had seen his overlord do in Damascus (2 Kings xvi. 10ff.). This may seem a trivial thing in itself, but it marks the opening of the flood of Assyrian influence in religion and morals, which was to reach so dangerous a height under Manasseh. The foolish king had not merely bartered away the independence of his country and thus virtually signed its death-warrant, but he had as lightly sacrificed the most precious inheritance of Judah—the purity of its faith.

To the clear-eyed prophet of Jahweh the fatal results of Ahaz' treachery were manifest from the first. In a series of vivid images, drawn probably

not long after the sign of Immanuel, he conjured up the terror and devastation that must soon overtake Judah as well.

On that day Jahweh will whistle for the fly and the bee,[1]
And they shall come and settle down, all of them,
In the rugged valleys and the clefts of the rock,
And on all the thorn-bushes and all the pastures (vii. 18f.).

On that day the Lord will shave off,
With a razor hired from beyond the river,
The head and the hair of the secret parts —
And also the beard will He sweep away (vii. 20).[2]

Seeing this people have rejected
The waters of Shiloah that gently flow,
Behold! therefore Jahweh doth bring up against them
The waters of the river mighty and full: [3]
And it shall rise over all its channels,
And shall pass over all its banks;
And on to Judah shall it sweep and o'erflow,
Even to the neck shall it reach (viii. 6–8).[4]

The first crisis was precipitated by the folly of king Hoshea. He had won the sceptre of the North by his intrigues with Tiglath-Pileser; but he had long been restive, and only looked for a favourable chance to throw off the yoke. The opportunity came with Tiglath-Pileser's death in 727. His

[1] The text is here expanded by a (correct) explanatory gloss.

[2] The rest of the chapter consists of two prosaic pictures of the utter desolation of the land, based on Isaianic ideas and figures.

[3] Here, too, the imagery is (correctly) explained by a prosaic annotator.

[4] The last clause of *v.* 8, with *vv.* 9f., belong to a late apocalyptic song of salvation.

successor Shalmaneser had his hands full of troubles in the East, and So (or Seve) king of Egypt was already fomenting rebellion among the petty states of Syria. Hoshea lent himself an easy victim to these designs. Negotiations were opened, and at the fitting moment tribute was withheld and the standard of rebellion definitely unfurled. The result was inevitable. As early as 724 B.C. Samaria was invested by Assyrian armies under the direct command of Shalmaneser. The siege was prolonged over three terrible years. The Samaritans defended themselves with consummate bravery and skill; but disciplined force, and the irresistible pressure of famine and plague, overcame the most heroic courage, and at length the proud capital yielded to Sargon (cf. p. 62).

The prophet of Judah followed the march of this awful tragedy with eyes lit up by no hope and but little sympathy. The cup of Israel's pride was filled to overflowing, and the only possible issue was death. In an elegy whose very splendour of colouring is that of the 'fading flower' of Samaria's beauty he foreshadows the end.

Ah! the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim,
And the fading flower of his glorious beauty,
That rests on the head of the valley of oil![1]

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[1] I have here retained גֵּיא־שְׁמָנִים (as in *v.* 4) instead of הַלּוּמֵי יָיִן (Duhm, Marti, Kittel, etc.).

Behold! the Lord hath a mighty and strong one,
Like tempest of hail or storm of destruction,[1]
That smiteth men down to the earth with violence.

Underfoot shall be trod the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim,
And the fading flower of his glorious beauty,
That rests on the head of the valley of oil.

It shall be like the first ripe fig before autumn,
That when one doth but see (he plucketh),
And while yet in his hand doth eat[2] (xxviii. 1–4).

But for his own people of Judah the prophet has as little hope. They too stagger and reel with strong drink. And his reiterated warnings they deride as the stuttering talk of a mere teacher of babes—the idle repetition of meaningless words. With such besotted minds no other teaching is possible than continued drilling in the elements of knowledge—the A B C of faith and morals—but the drilling must now come from a ruder teacher than Isaiah, even 'the gibbering lips and foreign tongue' of the Assyrian conqueror, under whose savage blows they will stagger and stumble, be snared and taken and broken.

These also stagger with wine, and reel under drink,
Priest and prophet are confused with wine;[3]
They stagger amid their visions, they stumble in judgment,
All their tables are full of vomit, and filth is in every place.

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[1] The following clause appears to be a mere variant. The reference is, of course, to the Assyrians.

[2] The prophecy against Samaria ends with *v.* 4. The immediate sequel (*vv.* 5f.) is a 'Messianic pendant' (Skinner), while the rest of the chapter is addressed to Judah.

[3] The text is here somewhat overladen by variants.

And whom would he teach his knowledge? To whom explain his message?
Is it babes just weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast?
That (he harpeth on) law by law, law by law, saw by saw, saw by saw,
A little here, and a little there!' [1]

Therefore by gibbering lips and a foreign tongue
Will he speak to this people, even He that said to them:
'This is the rest ye shall give to the weary,
This the refreshing'—but they would not listen.

So shall Jahweh's word be unto them law by law, law by law, saw by saw, saw by saw,
A little here, and a little there,
That on they may go, and stumble backward,
And be broken and snared and taken.

It is vain for them to imagine that their 'covenant with death' [2] will save them from Sheol. God has laid in Zion the corner-stone of His Kingdom, the plummet of which is righteousness; and faith in Him is the only ground of security.

Therefore, hear the word of Jahweh, ye scornful men,
Ye rulers of this people which be in Jerusalem!

Because ye say, 'We have struck a covenant with death,
And with Sheol have made a compact;
So the scourging scourge, when it cometh, shall reach us not,
For lies have we made our refuge, and under falsehood have hidden'—

Therefore, thus saith the Lord, even Jahweh,
'Behold! I lay in Zion a stone that is tried,

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[1] In this stanza we have the people's indignant protest against Isaiah's 'childish' teaching. I have followed Whitehouse in his rendering of the puns.

[2] By the 'covenant with death' Isaiah no doubt means the mystic superstitions already alluded to in viii. 19.

A precious foundation stone : He that believeth shall not be moved ;[1]
And justice will I make the line, and righteousness the plummet.

'But hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,
And the waters shall o'erflow the hiding-place ;
And your covenant with death shall be cancelled,
And your compact with Sheol shall stand not.

'When the scourging scourge doth come, ye shall be beaten down thereby,
As oft as it cometh, it shall catch you up :
Yea, morning by morning shall it pass, both day and night,
And pure terror shall it be to explain the message.'

For too short is the bed to stretch oneself in,
And too narrow the coverlet to wrap oneself in :
For Jahweh shall rise as on Mount Perazim,
He shall stir up his wrath as in the valley of Gibeon,

To do His deed—so strange His deed !—
And to work His work—so alien His work !
So then be not scornful, lest your bands be made strong ;
For a decree of destruction, a fixed one, have I heard
From Jahweh of hosts (xxviii. 7–22).[2]

The decree of destruction delayed its fulfilment. Ahaz remained quietly submissive to Sargon, while the 'scourging scourge' descended on Egypt and her confederates, the kings of Hamath and Gaza. But with the death of Ahaz (*c.* 720 B.C.) there came forebodings of disaster. His son and successor Hezekiah—a man of far more heroic spirit than his father—rapidly recovered the moral ascendency of Judah, and thenceforth devoted his energies to

[1] On the reading cf. Kittel's note.

[2] This prophecy is usually dated about the beginning of the Egyptian alliance ; but the general description, both of the sin and its punishment, seems to argue for the earlier period (cf. A. C. Welch, *Religion of Israel*, pp. 168ff.).

throwing off the Assyrian yoke. As early as 714–13 he joined Philistia, Edom and Moab in their intrigues with Egypt, and narrowly escaped destruction when Ashdod was reduced by the Assyrian Tartar, or Commander-in-chief (711). About the same time he established friendly relations with Merodach-Baladan, the irrepressible king of Chaldea (2 Kings xx. 12ff.). Isaiah saw in these strange movements the stirring of the fires of judgment he had so consistently predicted, yet he struggled with all his might to avert the catastrophe. For three years preceding the fall of Ashdod he walked through the streets of Jerusalem ' naked and barefoot '—clad only in the slave's shirt—as a sign that Egypt and her associates would be led captive slaves before the king of Assyria (ch. xx.). With equal vehemence he denounced the covenant with Merodach-Baladan, to his enlightened understanding as fatal a step as Ahaz' alliance with Tiglath-Pileser. His policy was still *quietness and confidence* (xxx. 15)—firm trust in Jahweh and freedom from political entanglements. Till the murder of Sargon and the accession of Sennacherib (705 B.C.) the crisis was averted ; then all bounds were broken, and the prophet could no longer control the flood. In Babylonia, Egypt and Ethiopia (both lands then under the united sway of the Ethiopian conqueror Shabaka), Sidon, Tyre and Philistia the standard of revolt was simultaneously raised ; and Hezekiah definitely committed his

people to the same cause. Isaiah continued to raise his voice in protest. The ambassadors from distant Ethiopia—the 'land of the whirring of wings,' with its people 'tall and burnished, dreaded both far and near'—he dismissed with an ominous vision of their shoots lopped off ere harvest, and their spreading branches hewn down and cast away, the ravenous birds summering and the beasts of the earth wintering on them (xviii. 1ff.).[1] The alliance with Egypt—'a people which cannot profit, and bring neither help nor gain, but only shame and reproach' (xxx. 5)—he denounced as sheer rebellion against Jahweh, that must lead to irretrievable ruin.

Ah! they that go down to Egypt for help,
And lean upon horses;
They that trust in chariots because they are many,
And in horsemen, for they are so strong;
But look not to Israel's Holy One,
Nor seek after Jahweh—
Though He too is wise, and bringeth calamity,
And calleth not back His words!

Behold! He shall rise 'gainst the house of the wicked,
And the helper of ill-doers;
For the Egyptians are men, not God,
And their horses are flesh, not spirit:
Jahweh shall stretch out His hand,
And the helper shall stumble;
The helped one also shall fall—
They shall all come down together (xxxi. 1–3).

In an image that recalls Amos he depicts Judah as

[1] In the present text the picture of destruction is turned against Assyria, but originally it would appear to have borne directly upon the Ethiopians.

a wall with a bulging breach, that must soon collapse with a crash (xxx. 13). But his most effective figure is that of Ariel, the altar-hearth, about to be drenched with the blood of her own children.

Woe to thee! Ariel, Ariel,
The city where David encamped!
Add year unto year,
Let the cycle of feasts pass round!
Then will I distress Ariel,
And there shall be mourning and moaning.
Unto me shalt thou be like Ariel (an altar-hearth),
And like David will I camp against thee.

I will circle thee round with entrenchments,
And will raise the siege-works against thee;
And low shalt thou speak from the ground,
From the dust shall thy speech come in whispers.[1]
And then, in an instant, suddenly,
Thou shalt be visited by Jahweh of hosts,
With thunder and earthquake and mighty noise,
With whirlwind and tempest and flame of devouring fire[2]
(xxix. 1ff.).

For four years Sennacherib's energies were concentrated on the enemy in the rear and flank. At length in 701 B.C. the storm burst on the West. With lightning strokes the conqueror smote Sidon and the Phœnician coast, swept Southward, stormed and captured Ekron, ravaged the land of the Philistines, inflicted a crushing blow on the Egypto-Ethiopian and allied forces at Eltekeh (near Ekron), overwhelmed Judah, forty-six of whose cities and

[1] The rest of the verse is an explanatory gloss.

[2] In *vv.* 5*a* and 7f. a fringe of light has been added to the original darkness of the prophecy.

fortresses he reduced, and then shot his bolt at Jerusalem.

In his own swift and vivid style the prophet has depicted the onset of the Assyrians.

He is up from Pene Rimmon,[1]
He hath gone by Ayyath;
He hath passed through Migron,
At Michmash he storeth his baggage.

He hath crossed the pass,
His night-lodge is Geba;[2]
Panic-stricken is Ramah,
Gibeah of Saul hath fled.

Shriek aloud, Bath-Gallim!
Hearken, Laishah! Answer her call, Anathoth!
A fugitive is Medeba;
The dwellers in Gebim haste them away.

This very day shall he halt at Nob,
He shall shake his fist—
At the mount of the daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem[3] (x. 28–32).

Yet all the while Jerusalem was filled with mad rioting and godless revelry, the gay throngs crowding the house-tops and spending their nights in 'eating flesh and drinking wine,' though to many of the revellers this was but the banquetting of the doomed. The whole scene comes before us in the Oracle of the Valley of Vision.

[1] On the reading, cf. Kittel's note.

[2] I have here read the 3rd sing. as elsewhere.

[3] The poem traces an ideal march Southward, by the nearest route. Sennacherib actually followed the easier, though more circuitous, path by the Philistine coast.

What aileth thee now that thou'rt gone
Each one to the housetops,
All full of shoutings, a city tumultuous,
A township exultant?

Thy slain are not slain by the sword,
Nor dead in battle;
All thy chieftains have taken to flight,
They have sped far away.[1]

Therefore I say, Look from me;
Bitter tears let me shed!
Strive not to comfort me
For the ruin of my people!

For a day of tumult and trampling and terror
Hath Jahweh of hosts
In the valley of vision—a breaking of walls,
And a cry to the mountains.[2]

Yea, the Lord Jahweh of hosts
Hath called on that day
For weeping and mourning,
For baldness and sackcloth.

But behold! joy and gladness,
The slaying of cattle and slaughter of sheep,
Eating of flesh and drinking of wine,
Eating and drinking, for 'to-morrow we die.'

And Jahweh of hosts hath revealed in mine ears:
Of a truth this guilt shall be purged not until ye die
(xxii. 1–14).[3]

As the ring of blackened walls drew nearer to

[1] The omitted words are apparently mere variants to the preceding. The perfects are best treated as prophetic: the horrors of the coming siege—famine, flight and massacre—are already present to Isaiah's imagination.

[2] *Vv.* 6–11 appear to belong to a different context. The natural sequel to the prediction of the 'day' (*v.* 5) is found in *vv.* 12ff. (cf. G. B. Gray, p. 364).

[3] The Oracle of the Valley of Vision is almost universally

Jerusalem, the mood of the people underwent a change, and thoughtless revelry gave place to serious reflection, and in many quarters to despondency and despair. Isaiah seized the opportunity to make perhaps his most moving appeal to their better selves.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!
For Jahweh doth speak:
Sons have I reared and brought up,
And they have rebelled against me.

The ox knoweth his owner,
And the ass his master's crib;
But Israel doth not know,
My people doth not consider.

Ah! sinful nation,
People laden with iniquity;
Ye brood of evil-doers,
Children that have dealt corruptly —

Who have forsaken Jahweh,
And despised the Holy One of Israel!
Why will ye yet be smitten,
That ye still rebel?

The whole head is sick,
And the whole heart faint;
From the sole of the foot to the head
No soundness is in it —

Nought but wounds and weals,
And bleeding sores,
Which have not been pressed nor bound,
Nor softened with oil.

assigned to the moment of exultation that followed the raising of the siege. To the present writer it seems much more in harmony with the moral situation of Jerusalem immediately before the siege began (cf. W. R Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 346f.; Wade, *Isaiah*, p. 142).

Your land is a desolation,
Your cities are burned with fire;
Your tilled land before you—
Aliens devour it.

And the daughter of Zion is left
Like a booth in a vineyard;
As a night-lodge in a field of cucumbers,
As a tower for the watch.[1]

Had not Jahweh of hosts
Left us a remnant,
As Sodom had we become,
Like unto Gomorrah (i. 2–9).

Whether it were the result of the prophet's appeal or the pressure of invasion, the mind of Jerusalem had become sufficiently subdued. Hezekiah himself was compelled to drink the dregs of humiliation, to send an abject message to Sennacherib, confessing his offence, and begging him to withdraw at the price of whatsoever tribute he might choose to impose, and to strip both palace and Temple of all their treasures as indemnity to the victor (2 Kings xviii. 14ff.). Isaiah appears to have watched the degrading transaction in silence. But when Senna-

[1] 'As for Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six strong cities, fortresses, and smaller towns in their neighbourhood without number . . . I besieged and captured by assault. 200,150 men, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, asses, oxen and sheep without number I brought forth from their midst, and reckoned as spoil. Himself I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem his royal city; ramparts I drew around him, and those who came out of the gates of his city I caused to return.'—Sennacherib, *Prism Inscription*, iii. 11–22.

cherib broke faith with Hezekiah, and demanded the surrender of Jerusalem and the deportation of its citizens to Assyria, he rose in heroic resistance. Jahweh meant to purge Jerusalem, not to destroy it. There lay the sure foundation stone of the new and greater Temple; and till the building was established in its beauty, Jerusalem was imperishable. Sennacherib's designs against the city were a presumptuous defiance of Jahweh, and he too must pay the penalty of the presumptuous.[1]

Woe! Asshur, the rod of mine anger,
And the staff of my fury!

Against a godless nation I send him,
And against the people of my wrath I charge him,
To take the spoil and to seize the prey,
And to trample them down as mire of the street.

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[1] A number of recent critics (Volz, Marti, Guthe, etc.) have found it impossible to reconcile Isaiah's faith in the deliverance of Zion with his previous predictions of doom. But the underlying basis of his whole prophetic ministry is positive. His conception of holiness of itself involved the permanence of good (cf. p. 90f.). And in the various crises of his ministry he consistently upheld this ideal. The overflowing flood might reach to the neck, but it would not submerge the real head of the nation—the godly remnant (viii. 8). Let all the falsehood be swept from Zion, faith and truth would yet survive, and become the firm pillars of a nobler state (xxviii. 16). Deep as the plough-shares cut into the heart of the nation, God's purpose was thereby to sow the seed for a harvest of righteousness; and Sennacherib or any other servant of Jahweh who went on 'opening and breaking the clods of the ground' for the pure pleasure of destruction was frustrating His purpose, and must be cast aside (*vv.* 23ff.).

But not so doth he deem it,
Nor so doth his heart devise;
For destruction is in his heart,
And to cut off nations not a few.

He saith: 'Are not my captains all of them kings?
Is not Calno as Carchemish?
Is not Hamath as Arpad?
Is not Samaria as Damascus?[1]

'By the strength of my hand have I wrought,
And by my wisdom, for I am the knowing one.
I have removed the bounds of the peoples,
I have plundered their treasures.

'My hand hath found like a nest
The wealth of the peoples:
And as one that doth gather eggs which are left,
All the earth have I gathered;
And there was none that moved a wing,
Or opened mouth or chirped.'

Is the axe to vaunt itself over the hewer therewith,
Or the saw to lord it over the man that plieth it —
Like a rod that should swing the wielder thereof,
Or a staff that should wield what is not wood?

Therefore shall Jahweh of hosts send leanness into his fat,
And under his glory shall kindling be kindled like kindling of fire:
And it shall devour his thorns and briars,
And the glory of his forest and garden land on the self-same day;
And the remnant of his forest trees shall be few,
That even a child might number them[2] (x. 5–19).

In another splendid passage the prophet depicts the falling of the trees before Jahweh's mighty axe.

[1] The prosaic verses 10–12 somewhat violently interrupt the movement of the thought.

[2] I have here omitted a few redundances, either explanatory losses or mutilated variants.

Behold! the Lord Jahweh of hosts
Shall lop off his boughs with terrible crash;
And down shall be hewn the lofty of stature,
And the tall ones shall bend and fall:
With His iron shall He strike down the groves of the forest,
And Lebanon shall fall in its majesty (*vv.* 33f.).

Isaiah's faith once more found its signal vindication. The advance of a strong Ethiopian force appears to have caused a hurried raising of the siege of Jerusalem; and, as Sennacherib marched South to meet this more powerful enemy, the flower of his *Grande Armée* perished ingloriously of pestilence on the marsh-land of Pelusium, and the haughty conqueror was compelled to lead home his scattered fragments—in due time to fall a victim to the treachery of his own sons.[1]

The passing of the Assyrian peril saw a new uplift of national spirit in Judah. Under the direct auspices of Hezekiah the fortifications of the capital were strengthened and other works of public utility carried through, the most notable being the Shiloah tunnel and reservoir (2 Kings xx. 20). To this interval of peace most probably belongs the religious reform that likewise signalized Hezekiah's reign. The brazen serpent which had degenerated into a fetish was hewn down as a mere 'piece of brass,' unworthy of the worship of Jahweh; and a number of the high places appear also to have been

[1] On the critical questions surrounding the historical narratives in 2 Kings xviii. 13–xx. 21 (Isa. xxxvi.–xxxix.) cf. the discussions in Skinner and Whitehouse, with literature there cited.

stripped of their degrading associations, their altars destroyed, and their sites profaned (xviii. 4).

In this real impulse after holiness of worship and life we can hardly fail to discern the dominant influence of Isaiah. After years of misunderstanding and failure his lofty patriotism had triumphed, and king and people both gave willing heed to his advice. The foundation stone appeared now to have been well and truly laid, and the prophet could dream his dreams of a new Kingdom where righteousness held sway, and King and princes ruled in the fear of God, for the peace and well-being of their people.

The people that walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
They that dwelt in the land of deep darkness—
On them hath the light shined forth.

Thou hast multiplied exultation,
And joy hast Thou increased:
They rejoice before Thee like the joy at harvest,
As men exult when they divide the spoil.

For the yoke that was their burden,
And the bars[1] *upon their shoulder,*
The rod of their oppressor,
Thou hast shattered as on the day of Midian.

And every boot of trampling warrior,
And tunic stained with blood,
Shall even be for burning,
As fuel for the fire.

For a child is born to us,
A son is given to us;
And the rule shall rest upon his shoulder,
And his name shall be called:

[1] Read מַטּוֹת (G. B. Gray).

Wonderful Counsellor,
God-like Hero,
Father for ever,
Prince of peace.[1]

Great shall be his rule,
And of peace no end,
Upon the throne of David,
And over his dominion –

To establish and uphold it
With justice and with righteousness,
From henceforth even for ever:
And the zeal of Jahweh of hosts will do this (ix. 1–7).

Behold! a king shall reign in righteousness,
And princes shall rule with justice;
And each shall be as a refuge from the wind,
And a covert from the tempest —
As streams of water in parched ground,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

And the eyes of them that see shall no more be dimmed,
And the ears of them that hear shall hearken;
And the heart of the hasty shall know how to judge,
And the tongue of the stammering shall be swift to speak.
And no more shall the fool be called noble,
Or the knave be accounted princely.[2]

* * *

Till on us the Spirit be poured from on high.
Then shall the steppe become fruitful field,
And the fruitful field be esteemed an orchard;

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[1] The names describe the qualities of the ideal Ruler: he is a marvel in counsel, greater even than Solomon, endowed with Divine strength for his nation's warfare, but essentially a Prince of peace, a true Father to his people as long as he reigns.

[2] The context is interrupted by a more precise definition of this new order of nobility—the nobility of noble aims and deeds —as well as an isolated prophecy on the easy-going women of Jerusalem. The true sequel to *vv.* 1–5 is found in *v.* 15, the first *stichos* of which is lost.

And justice shall dwell in the steppe,
And righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

And the work of righteousness shall be peace,
And the fruit of justice eternal security:
My people shall dwell in abodes of peace,
In sure habitations and quiet resting-places.
And happy are ye that sow by all waters,
And send forth the foot of the ox and the ass (xxxii. 1ff.).[1]

This picture of the coming Kingdom is an idealization of the Davidic monarchy, projected upon the screen of the future. As such, it has its limitations. The noblest prophetic vision could not yet contemplate a purely spiritual Kingdom, in which all men should be one in God and His Anointed. But in his perception of righteousness as the base of the Kingdom, and goodness, love and peace as its perfect work, Isaiah has caught a real glimpse of 'the King in His beauty.' Jesus fulfilled the prophecy, not by any literal correspondence with the portraiture of the Messianic King, but by founding on His own Person a Kingdom which cannot be moved or overthrown, a Kingdom of 'righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Rom. xiv. 17).

[1] The Messianic prophecies have likewise been the subject of much discussion. It is now generally admitted that there is nothing in the language or style which tells against Isaianic authorship. The two rendered above are charged with all the splendour we associate with Isaiah, and remind us of various aspects of his earlier prophecies. Nor does their outlook on the future appear to be wider or more spiritual than we naturally expect from a prophet of Isaiah's forward view. The related prophecy, xi. 1–9, however, seems to presuppose the extinction of the Davidic monarchy, and its idyllic visions are in closest harmony with the exalted dreams of the age of Restoration.

CHAPTER IX

Micah the Democrat

DURING the most critical years of his ministry Isaiah was supported by another prophet, very different in temper and outlook, yet at one with him in the great essentials of faith and conduct. While Isaiah was a royalist in his instincts and ideals, Micah was democratic to the core. The son of an honest yeoman of Moresheth Gath, a small village on the Shephelah, or sunny slope of Judah leaning on the Philistine plain,[1] his sympathies were with his own class and people. Isaiah had been called to Jahweh's service by a vision of His kingly majesty that ennobled all he said and did; Micah heard the voice of God in the sufferings of his hapless neighbours. This coloured his whole thought as a prophet. He, too, poured out the torrents of Divine wrath against the manifold corruptions of his time—the idolatry and oppression, the scanty measures and deceitful weights, the prostitution of priests and prophets at the altar of Mammon, and the self-complacency with which

[1] For a fine description of Moresheth and its neighbourhood, see G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, i. 376ff.

they leaned on Jahweh, saying, ' Is not Jahweh in our midst ? No evil shall come on us '— but what stirred him to the heart was the injustice under which his fellows laboured. Isaiah had touched the land question among many others ; Micah set it in the forefront, as the burning point of the social problem. For him a nation's prosperity consisted, not in increase of worldly goods, but in the happiness of its home life. And the selfish land-grabbers who coveted fields and seized them, evicting a man from the heritage of his fathers, and ousting his wife and children from their ' pleasant homes,' were the real enemies of Judah. In his invectives against these disturbers of the peace Micah used none of Isaiah's splendour of diction or imagination. His accent is equally of the country-side, plain, blunt, sometimes even rough, the straightforward utterance of an outraged conscience, though his lips quiver with emotion when he touches on the sorrows his people must endure in the day of their calamity.

Micah's prophetic ministry appears to have begun just before the ' fading flower ' of Samaria's beauty was trodden underfoot, while the two capitals shone out as the glory of all Israel. With eyes inflamed by Divine jealousy he looked upon their glory. Samaria and Jerusalem were the hot-beds of sin for Israel : they were the sin of the people incarnate. Therefore in the impending judgment they must bear the brunt of Jahweh's wrath.

Who is Jacob's transgression—
Is it not Samaria?
And who the sin of Judah—
Is it not Jerusalem?

So will I make Samaria an heap of field ruins,
The beds of a vineyard;
And into the valley will I pour her stones,
And lay bare her foundations.

And all her graven images shall be dashed in pieces,
And all her Asherim burnt with fire;[1]
For of harlot's hire were they gathered,
And to harlot's hire shall return.

For this let me wail and lament,
Hie me naked and barefoot:
Let me make a lament like jackals,
And mourning like daughters of the desert (ostriches)*!*

For her wound is incurable,
It hath come unto Judah;
It toucheth the gate of my people,
Even Jerusalem (i. 5–9).

In spite of his anger against the sinful cities, Micah has been unable to withhold the homage of a tear for their downfall; and when he pictures the onset of the devastating storm on the townships and villages of his own loved home in the Shephelah, his rugged nature melts in pity.

Tell it not in Gath (*Tell-town*),[2]
In Bokim (*Weep-town*) *weep ye bitterly;*[3]

[1] The verse is somewhat overladen in the original (cf. Kittel's note).

[2] As Gath was destroyed some years before Micah, the words must be taken in a proverbial sense (from 2 Sam. i. 20). It is possible, however, that we should follow the Syriac version in reading בַּגִּלְגָּל אַל־תְּגִילוּ, *Rejoice not in Gilgal* (*Joy-town*). Gilgal and Bochim (Bokim) are associated in Judg. ii. 1.

[3] Read בְּבֹכִים בָּכוּ תִבְכּ (cf. LXX).

In Beth-Ophrah (Dust-house) roll in dust,
Pass over, inhabitants of Shaphir (Fair-town), in nakedness!

The men of Zaanan (March-town) have not marched forth,
Wailing doth seize Beth-ezel (Nearby-town) for smiting and pain;[1]
How do the inhabitants of Maroth (Bitterness) still hope for good,
Since evil hath come from Jahweh to the gates of Jerusalem?

Harness the horse to the chariot, inhabitants of Lachish (Horse-town),
For in you were found the transgressions of Israel;[2]
So must ye give the parting (betrothal) gift to Moresheth (the Betrothed) of Gath,
While Beth-Achzib (the House of Deception) is become a deception to the kings of Israel.

Once more will I bring the conquerer to you, inhabitants of Mareshah (Conquering one);
To Adullam (perpetual ruin)[3] *shall go the glory of Israel:*
So make thyself bald, and shave thee, for thy darling children,
Thy baldness enlarge as the vulture, for they be gone to captivity[4]
(*vv.* 10–16).

Swiftly the deluge descended. Within two years of the fall of Samaria the Assyrian conqueror swept past Moresheth on his way to the battle of Raphia

[1] The text is very obscure and uncertain. The above translation presupposes מִמַּכּוֹת וּמָרוֹת, *from smitings and bitterness* (suggested in part by Duhm).

[2] The transgressions found in Lachish probably relate to the traffic in horses with Egypt, denounced also by Hosea and Isaiah.

[3] The reading here, too, is doubtful. I have, however, adhered to 'Adullam,' and added the probable by-meaning.

[4] Critics like Wellhausen and Marti have taken offence at the accumulated paranomasias in this passage. But for the prophet they were no elaborate trifling with words, but a real language of the heart. As the name was the genuine expression of the thought, the similarity of sounds involved a mystical connection of the places named with the fate in store for each.

(720 B.C.), and nine years later his Tartan traversed the same stricken path to the siege of Ashdod (711). Micah no doubt watched with dimmed eyes the desolation of scenes dear to him from childhood. Still Jerusalem stood intact. Her wealthy nobles even exploited the hardships of the peasantry for their own enrichment. Micah was stung to the quick by their callous greed and cruelty, and inveighed against them in rasping tones, softened only for a moment in the elegy over his people's ruin.

Woe to them that devise iniquity
Upon their beds;
And when morning breaks they do it,
For 'tis in their power!

They covet fields, and seize them,
And houses, and lift them;
They crush a wight with his home,
A man with his heritage (ii. 1f.).

Jahweh is even now planning against that brood of evil-doers a disaster from which they shall not be able to withdraw their necks or to stand erect. And

On that day one shall raise
A taunt-song against you;
And a wailing lament shall be wailed,
'We are all undone.'

The lot of my people is measured,
There is none to restore it;
To our captors our fields are allotted —
We are all undone[1] (v. 4).

Words like these call forth indignant protests against the prophet.

[1] On the text of. Kittel's note. I have repeated the wailing note as a refrain.

Babble not on! they say,
Babble not thus!
No shame can befall
The household of Jacob!

Is the spirit of Jahweh cut short,
Are these His doings?
Are not His words for good
To His people Israel? (ii. 6f.).

Jahweh is truly good to His people; but these ravagers of happy homes are enemies of the household of Israel, and must suffer the fate of the outcast.

But ye rise up as foes to my people
Instead of friends;[1]
Ye strip from peaceful travellers
The booty of war.

The wives of my people ye thrust
From their pleasant homes;
From their babes ye pluck away
My glory for ever.

Arise, then, and go!
For this is no resting-place (for you);
Because of uncleanness ye shall be destroyed
With remedeless destruction[2] (*vv.* 8–10).

In the most implacable of all his oracles Micah assails the rulers of Jerusalem, to whom it was given to know judgment and decide what was right, but who used that prerogative to devour the people 'like meat in the pot and flesh in the caldron' (iii. 1–3), and the prophets who misled them, preaching Peace when they 'bite with their teeth,' but

[1] On the reading cf. Kittel's note.

[2] *V.* 11 is a marginal gloss to *v.* 6, while *vv.* 12f. belong to a prophecy of Restoration, clearly dating from post-exilic times.

proclaiming holy warfare against such as 'put not into their mouth' (*vv.* 5–7).

I am verily full of strength,
And of justice and might —
To declare his transgressions to Jacob,
And his sin to Israel.

Hear this, then, ye headmen of Jacob,
And chieftains of Israel's house,
Ye that abhor justice,
And all that is right pervert!

Ye that build up Zion in blood,
And Jerusalem with crime!
Her headmen judge for a bribe,
And her priests give the Torah for hire.

Her prophets divine for money,
Yet on Jahweh they lean, and say:
'Is not Jahweh in our midst?
No evil shall come on us.'

Therefore on your account
Shall Zion be ploughed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become ruins,
And the Mount of the Temple a forest high-place (iii. 8–12).

In Micah's insistence on the inevitable ruin of Jerusalem we meet with another of those discords in prophecy which cause such trouble to literalists, yet rightly understood yield us a grander harmony. Prophecy is no rigidly mechanical voice. It is the

[1] On iv. 1–4 cf. p. 94, n. 1. The rest of ch. iv. v. consists of prophecies of restoration from Babylon, and the future prosperity of the pious Remnant, which belong to a much later date than the end of the eighth century B.C. The sweet notes of reconciliation which close the book (vii. 7–20) are most naturally assigned to the same general period.

melodious utterance of inspired personality, and its notes vary with the rich variety of personality. Each prophet saw the truth with his own eyes, and brought it home to the conscience of the people in his own way, in direct relation to the present need. Isaiah was intent on the building up of the Kingdom of God in Israel; and for him Zion was inviolable till the Kingdom was established in strength. Micah lacked his breadth of vision, but he saw deeper into the heart of things. In his eyes the Kingdom of God was based on no earthly citadel, however splendid or steadfast, but in the hearts of living men and women, the simple ones who feared God and did His will—a real foregleam of the truth which Jesus first made clear, that 'God is spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth' (John iv. 24).

These urgent notes of warning from the humble home-stead in the Shephelah were apparently not without their influence on king Hezekiah (cf. Jer. xxvi. 19), and may even have contributed in some measure to the Reformation which marked the closing years of his reign (pp. 129f.). But for a Reformation which allowed rich merchants to continue accumulating their 'treasures of wickedness' under cover of religion Micah had no place in his thoughts. Here again his keen eye has pierced to the heart, and in a passage which unites the key-notes of Amos, Hosea and Isaiah he gives immortal

expression to the cardinal duties of 'religion pure and undefiled'—

Wherewith shall I come before Jahweh,
And bow to the God of heaven?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves but one year old?

Will Jahweh be pleased with thousands of rams,
With ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first-born as the price of my guilt,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

It hath been shown thee, O man, what is good,
What Jahweh desireth of thee:
But to do justice, and delight in love,
And humbly walk with thy God (vi. 6–8).[1]

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[1] Since the publication of Ewald's *Prophets*, these verses have been very generally ascribed to a nameless prophet of the time of Manasseh. But apart from the reference to child-sacrifice there is little to suggest this period—the prophecy points to an age of religious earnestness rather than a time of reaction—and Manasseh was neither the first nor the last to offer 'the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul.' With more justice to the accent of the prophecy Marti and J. M. P. Smith assign it to the fifth century, the period of wise men and teachers (cf. Isa. lviii. 2ff.). The moral attitude is so general, however, that it may well represent Micah's preaching to a generation that sought salvation in ritual holiness. If the style differs from his usual vehemence of invective, it may be attributed to the mood of calm reason with which he approaches men really desirous of pleasing God.

CHAPTER X

Zephaniah and the Day of the Lord

THE Reformation under Hezekiah was short-lived. As so often happens when Puritanism has won domination over an unwilling people, the stern religious zeal of the reforming party saw its reaction in a wild outburst of licence and corruption which threatened to undo their good work, and sweep away for ever the purity of Judah's faith and worship. The new king Manasseh inherited all his father's energy of purpose; but unhappily this was consecrated to no holy end. Till his time the Southern kingdom had kept comparatively clear of the grosser abominations of Baal worship—the nameless pollutions that defiled the sanctuaries of Ephraim. But, regardless of the fate which had befallen the Northland, Manasseh now introduced the worst of these profanities into the heart of Judah. Not merely did he restore the high places which his father had defiled, but he built altars for Baal and Ashtart, and made his son pass through the fire to Melech; he likewise imported new gods from the East, building altars for the Assyrian 'hosts of heaven' in the very courts of the Temple, thus bringing the sin of Ahaz

home to roost upon his people (2 Kings xxi. 2–7). That these innovations were not carried through without emphatic protests from the godly kernel of the nation may be inferred from the tale of bloodshed that also dishonours the name of Manasseh: 'Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other' (*v.* 16). Naturally his fiercest vengeance fell on the prophetic school. Many of them appear to have fallen victims to the persecution, and for the time being they were reduced to silence. No commanding voice from Jahweh speaks to us out of the fiery furnace of Manasseh's reign. The spiritual activities of the devout were confined to quiet influence and patient hope, tilling the ground and sowing the seed for a richer harvest in days to come.

The brief rule of Amon and the early years of Josiah's minority—when the young king was still under the tutelage of the men who had led his father astray—were marked by no decisive change. The people of Judah and Jerusalem had settled down upon their lees, saying in their hearts, 'Jahweh doth neither good nor ill' (Zeph. i. 12). Suddenly their sense of security was dispelled by the rumour of a terrible new danger from the North, the imminence of which roused prophecy likewise from its long slumber.

The wild, mysterious regions beyond the Caucasus

had long been the haunt of restless nomads, of whom the Scythians were among the fiercest and most adventurous. Their prowess in battle had gained them a commanding position among their neighbours. Now lust of blood and conquest led them—like the Huns and Tartars of a later age—to try their fortunes on a wider field. About 630 B.C. hordes of these bold Centaurs had crossed the passes of the Caucasus; within two or three years they overwhelmed Western Asia, the hegemony of which they held for a generation (*c.* 627-600), while a wave from the main stream swept along the Philistine sea-board, lapping the outposts of Judah, and being diverted from the conquest of Egypt only by the craven policy of a bribe.[1]

The approach of the Scythian flood was naturally the occasion of wide-spread panic among the 'men at ease' in Jerusalem. To add conscience to their terror Zephaniah stood forth as the prophet of Judgment, the herald of the great Day of Jahweh, which Amos and Isaiah had already forewarned them of, and which was now at hand, speeding 'faster than a warrior.'

In personal bearing Zephaniah most nearly resembles Isaiah. He too is a native of Jerusalem, a man of royal rank and dignity, the great-great-grandson of Hezekiah (i. 1), familiar with the habits

[1] On the Scythian invasion of Asia Minor, cf. Herod. i. 103–106; and for the history and habits of the Scythians, iv. 5–82.

and practices of the Court. He has all Isaiah's reverence—that awful sense of the holiness of Jahweh which makes mere earthly splendour shrivel as before the flames—and a certain remote and impressive grandeur resembling that of the cataract or the thunder. He lacks, however, the radiant imagination and glowing heart of the older prophet. There is no spiritual charm in Zephaniah's visions of the Judgment Day, no gleam of poetic beauty, and no sympathy for the victims of Divine wrath. With true discernment mediaeval art portrayed him as the man with the Lantern of the Lord (cf. i. 12), searching out sinners for destruction.[1]

The prophecy opens with an apocalypse of judgment on all the earth.

I will sweep, will sweep off all
From the face of the ground, saith Jahweh:
I will sweep off man and beast,
I will sweep off fowl of heaven and the fishes of the sea (i. 2f.).

The devastating flood strikes first on Jerusalem, that sink of heathen impurities.

My hand will I stretch upon Judah,
And upon all the dwellers in Jerusalem;
And I will cut off the remnant of Baal,[2]
And the name of his priestlings;

[1] In his severe austerity and oppressive sense of coming judgment Zephaniah may remind us of Savonarola; but we miss the Florentine prophet's personal fascination, and extraordinary grasp of practical affairs. Zephaniah puts forth no hand to help his people, or to advance the reign of righteousness. Doom precedes all hope of betterment.

[2] That is, *the last vestige of Baalism.*

And them that bow down on the housetops
To the host of heaven;
And them that bow down to Jahweh,
While they swear by Melech;
And them that have swerved from Jahweh,
And seek Him not[1] (i. 4–6).

Under the figure of a great sacrifice the ring-leaders in apostasy are brought together for destruction.

Silence before Jahweh the Lord,
For near is His day!
For Jahweh hath prepared a sacrifice,
He hath consecrated His guests.[2]
On that day will I visit the princes,
And the house of the king,
And all who array themselves
In garments of the alien.[3]
And I will visit all who leap
Across the threshold,[4]
And who fill their master's house
With violence and fraud.

On that day, Hark! a cry from the Fish-gate,
And a wail from the Newtown;

---

[1] In the last three couplets the prophet denounces the irreligion of (*a*) those who have yielded to Assyrian polytheism; (*b*) the syncretists, like king Manasseh, who try to combine faith in Jahweh with the cultus of Melech and other Canaanite gods; and (*c*) the apostates who have deliberately abandoned Jahweh.

[2] The guests are most probably the Scythians, who are at the same time Jahweh's instruments of slaughter. The victims are clearly the false guides and rulers of Judah.

[3] The aping of foreign fashions in dress was more than foppery. Dress being an essential part of the personality (cf. 1 Sam. xviii. 4), it was virtual treason against Israel and Israel's God.

[4] On the world-wide superstition of 'leaping across the threshold' (for fear of the spirits of the house), see Trumbull *Threshold Covenant.*

And a mighty crash from the Heights,
While the Mortar-dwellers wail.[1]
On that day will I search
Jerusalem with a lamp;
And will visit those at ease,
Who are settled on their lees —
Those that say within their hearts,
'Jahweh doth neither good nor ill.'
Their substance shall become a spoil,
And their houses desolation (*vv.* 7–13).

The apocalypse now clothes itself more definitely under the form of the Day of Jahweh, swiftly drawing near.

Near is Jahweh's day, the great!
Near, and hastening on;
Near is Jahweh's day, the bitter!
Speeding faster than a warrior.[2]
A day of wrath that day,
A day of stress and distress;
A day of waste and desolation,
A day of murk and gloom;
A day of cloud and darkness,
A day of trumpet and alarum,
Against the fenced cities,
And against the lofty turrets.[3]

And sore will I press upon men,
And they shall walk as the blind;

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[1] The localities here indicated run from the Northern gate and suburb of Jerusalem (the Fish-gate and Newtown) towards the centre of the city (the Mortar being probably the trough of the Tyropoeon, the quarter assigned to the 'merchant people' and money-makers). The danger thus smites Jerusalem from the North.

[2] For צָרַח שָׁם גִּבּוֹר read הָשׁ מִגִּבּוֹר (J. M. P. Smith).

[3] Zephaniah's picture of the Day of Jahweh is the evident source of the mediaeval hymn, *Dies irae, Dies illa.*

And their blood shall be poured out like dust,
And their flesh as dung.
Neither their silver nor gold
Shall be able to save them,
In the day of Jahweh's anger,
In the flame of His fury.
The whole land shall be devoured
With awful ruin;
For a full end shall Jahweh make
Of all the dwellers in the land[1] (i. 14–18).

In judgment the Lord is no respecter of persons. Guilty nations must all die the death. Thus the flood sweeps on through Philistia to Egypt and Ethiopia, then Northward to Assyria, that fertile mother of cruelty, laying the pride of man low, and leaving the seats of the mighty 'pastures for shepherds and folds for flocks.'

Get you shame, yea, be ashamed,
O nation unabashed,
Ere ye become as dust,
Like chaff that passeth away![2]
For Gaza shall be forsaken,
And Ashkelon a waste:
Ashdod—by noonday shall they rout her,
And Ekron shall be uprooted.[3]
Ah, woe! ye dwellers on the sea-shore,
Folk of the Cherethites![4]

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[1] I have here made a slight transposition of clauses.

[2] This stanza is almost certainly the introduction to the Oracle against the Philistines, in which case *v.* 3 will be an dded note of comfort for Israel. On the reading cf. Kittel's note.

[3] It is difficult to render the pun in English; but Duhm has aptly translated the clauses, *Denn Gaza wird vergessen, . . . Zum Acker Ekron.*

[4] The Philistines are called Cherethites in allusion to their

I will destroy thee, to the last inhabitant,
O land of the Philistines!
And thou shalt be pastures for shepherds,
And folds for flocks;
In the houses of Ashkelon
They shall lie down at night-fall.[1]

* * *
* * *

And you, too, men of Cush,
Shall be slain by the sword.
Then my hand will I stretch to the North,[2]
And destroy Asshur;
And Nineveh will I make a waste,
Dry as the desert.
Herds shall lie down in her midst—
All the beasts of the field;[3]
Both pelican and bittern
Shall lodge on her capitals;
The owl shall hoot in the window,
The raven on the doorstep (ii. 1–14).[4]

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origin from Crete. On the reading here and in *v.* 6, cf. Kittel's notes.

[1] The references to the 'bringing back of the captivity' and the heritage of the 'remnant' are clearly post-exilic. The section on Moab and Ammon (ii. 8–11) is equally alien to the context, interrupting the natural movement of the prophecy, and reflecting the mood of the Exile (cf. G. A. Smith, J. M. P. Smith, etc.). Probably a couplet or two, describing the ruin of Egypt, has fallen out before *v.* 12.

[2] I have here read the 1st pers. (as in the former part of the prophecy), the change to the 3rd pers. being probably due to *v.* 11.

[3] For גְּוִי (dittography to גַּם) read שְׁדֵי (LXX). On other changes in *v.* 14, cf. Kittel's notes.

[4] The denunciation of Jerusalem's sin (iii. 1–7) bears the general stamp of prophetic idealism rather than the peculiar mark of Zephaniah. The rest of the chapter, with its glowing visions of Jerusalem's redemption (*vv.* 8–13) and world-wide renown (*vv.* 14–20), is generally recognized as late. On *vv.* 14–20 cf. Davidson, Driver, G. A. Smith, etc.

CHAPTER XI

The Call of Jeremiah

We have already observed the tendency of prophets to appear in constellation. The two first lights in the prophetic heaven, Elijah and Elisha, are like twin-stars flashing across the evening shadows of Israel's history. Their great successors, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, form a brilliant galaxy to illuminate the growing darkness. As little was Zephaniah a solitary star in the night. The short interval which separated his prophecy from the Scythian crisis with the downfall and captivity of Judah saw the emergence of another radiant cluster, that brought the light of religion more directly into the life of humanity than even the noblest figures of the former generation. In this prophetic company the shining point is Jeremiah, the prophet of Personal Religion.

Jeremiah was born at Anathoth, a small village on the outskirts of Jerusalem, towards the close of Manasseh's evil reign (*c.* 650 B.C.). The son of Hilkiah, a God-fearing priest of the local sanctuary, and probably a descendant of the old 'house of Abiathar,' he would be sheltered from the wickedness of the age, and trained from his earliest years

to know and serve the living God. His youthful imagination was steeped in the history of Jahweh's dealings with His people, while conscience was quickened by close and loving study of the older prophets, especially Hosea and Isaiah, whose blending notes of judgment and mercy struck a truly responsive chord in his heart. As he thus grew in wisdom and grace, there may already have come to him premonitions of the future—high instincts and aspirations that made him feel he was 'a dedicated spirit'—for even from the womb Jahweh had set him apart for His service. But not till the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, when he was somewhat over twenty years of age, did he receive the definite call to prophesy, which is described with such delicacy and insight in the opening chapter.

The story of the call sheds a glow of light on his subsequent activity. In no other prophet is this experience so intimately associated with personal life and character. Amos had been driven by the Spirit of God smiting upon his conscience to break with the past, and take up a new vocation that seemed incongruous with all his former habits and ideals. Isaiah had fallen prostrate before the vision of God's transcendent holiness, and in that sacred hour had committed himself to the service of the King of men and angels. Jeremiah's call is more of the nature of a spiritual birth, in which the gracious influences of bygone years come to their frui-

tion. As he walked through the fields of Anathoth in quiet communion with his God, the meaning and purpose of his life lay suddenly unveiled before him; and with a full sense of responsibility he accepted the Divine commission, and went forth as Jahweh's prophet to the nations.

It was towards the close of winter—January or February 626 B.C.—when the first white blossoms of the almond gave promise of the coming spring. For years past the heart of Israel had been held in the icy grasp of a spiritual winter that seemed inexorable as a vice; but here too the signs of spring were appearing. From the distant North the rumblings of the Scythian storm grew ever louder and more ominous. Zephaniah had launched his prophecy of the Day of Jahweh; and Jeremiah was caught up in the same mighty sweep of revelation. 'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest out of the womb I consecrated thee (to my service); now I have ordained thee a prophet to the nations. . . . See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant' (i. 5ff.).

An overwhelming responsibility for a young and sensitive spirit like Jeremiah! No wonder that the first shock of self-consciousness plunged him into an agony of nervous fear and doubt. 'Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak; for I am only a

boy' (*v.* 6). But what impresses us most deeply is the heroism with which he rose to his task. While others will undertake Herculean labours lightly, the true heroes are such as assume responsibilities with a grave sense of what they involve, and may even be tempted at first to decline their trust. Jeremiah naturally shrank from a mission that must bring him into ceaseless conflict with people and country; but the Lord God had spoken to him, and with all his strength of mind and heart he responded to the call, resolved to live and suffer and die, if need were, in His service.

The sight of the almond-blossom was an abiding inspiration to the prophet. As the sleep of winter had been broken by the almond (*shāḳed*), so Jahweh stood watching (*shôḳed*) over His word to perform it (*vv.* 11f.). This sense of Jahweh's 'wakefulness' prepared him to see in the boiling caldron, fed with flame and fuel from the North, a portent of the evil soon to break out thence upon all the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, because of their wickedness in forsaking Jahweh and burning incense to other gods, even worshipping the work of their own hands (*vv.* 13ff.).[1] Thus brought into perfect sympathy with

[1] This second vision no doubt rested also on real experience —the chance sight of a boiling caldron at some cottage door. The details are rather uncertain; but probably we should read מְפָנַי for מִפָּנִי and תִּפְתַּח for תִּפָּתַח, translating: *I said, I see a boiling caldron, and its face is turned Northward; and Jahweh said to me, Out of the North shall evil be blown upon all*

the mind and purpose of God—his lips touched by the finger of the Lord, and his mouth filled with His words—Jeremiah received into his trembling heart a sudden access of Divine strength. 'Behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city and a wall of brass, against the kings of Judah and against the princes thereof, against the priests and against the people of the land; and they shall fight against thee, but shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee, saith Jahweh, to deliver thee.' And at the word he 'girt up his loins,' and arose, and entered upon his life-work as God's ambassador, ready to go whithersoever He might send him, and to speak all that He commanded him (*vv.* 17ff.).

the inhabitants of the land. The caldron is apparently supported by stones on three sides, while the fourth (that toward the North) is kept open to receive fuel for the fire. 'The idea is not that the scalding contents of the pot will pour down on Judah from the North (cf. G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, ii. 228), but that the fire and fuel which make it boil are brought from the North. The caldron will then be thought of as in Judah, its inhabitants are thought of as within it, while the fuel which makes it boil represents the enemy' (Peake, *Jeremiah*, i. 83).

CHAPTER XII

The Foe from the North

THE earliest prophecies of Jeremiah were delivered no doubt immediately after his call, and most probably in his native village of Anathoth. These prophecies are profoundly interesting. In their general moral outlook quite on the lines of the older prophets, they yet breathe a wonderful freshness and originality. The language is delicate, nervous, steeped in poetic loveliness, and overflowing with a passionate delight in Nature. At once Jeremiah takes his place in the front rank of lyrical poets. In Davidson's judgment 'the pathos and depth of these chapters are not surpassed by anything in Scripture.'[1]

The scene opens with a charming picture of Israel's early innocence and devotion to her Lord.

Thus saith Jahweh:

I remember thy youthful love,
The affection of thy bridal days —
How thou followedst me in the wilderness,
Through a land unsown.

Israel was sacred unto Jahweh,
The firstfruit of His increase;

[1] *Dictionary of the Bible*, ii. 570.

All that ate thereof were held guilty,
Evil o'ertook them (ii. 2f.).

But all too soon the beauty of the bridal days is dispelled.

Have the heathen changed their gods,
Which are no gods?
Yet my people have changed their glory
For that which profiteth not.

Be astounded at this, O heavens,
Yea, shudder exceedingly!
For my people have wrought two evils,
Is the Rede of Jahweh:

Me they have forsaken,
The fountain of living waters,
And have hewn them broken cisterns,
That hold no water (*vv.* 11–13).

Planted a generous and fruitful vine, Israel has become 'the rank shootling of a wild vine' (*v.* 21). She is polluted throughout by foul iniquity, which neither lye nor soap can cleanse (*v.* 22); she gaddeth like a swift young camel, in the heat of her passion, after her lovers the Baalim (*v.* 23); she boweth down to stocks and stones, calling them her father and mother (*v.* 27), and forgetting Jahweh 'days without number' (*v.* 32). No correction availeth to make her hear His word—she will be her own mistress, and will go no more to Him for guidance (*v.*30). Because of this infidelity to Jahweh, the land is full of injustice and unrighteousness, falsehood and adultery and the shedding of innocent blood (*v.* 34): yet Israel boasts of her innocence (*v.* 35), and relies with

confidence on the gracious kindness and compassion of her God.

Thou hast an harlot's forehead,
And wilt not blush for it;
Dost thou not even call me
Companion of thy youth?

'Will He keep His wrath for ever,
Retain it to the end?'
So sayest thou, but workest
Such evil as thou canst (iii. 3–5).

Jahweh had thought to treat His people as a son, and give them the noblest inheritance among the nations; but they had continually played Him false, and betrayed Him like a faithless wife.

I said, 'Ah! gladly now
'Mong the sons would I place thee,
And give thee a pleasant land,
The goodliest heritage of the nations.'

And I said, 'Thou shalt call me Father,
And shalt not turn from me;'
But as a woman is faithless to her lover,
Ye were faithless unto me (*vv.* 19f.).[1]

The penalty of unfaithfulness is rejection without hope of return; but Jahweh cannot lightly forget His early love. No sooner does He hear the sounds of weeping and supplication on the bare heights of Canaan—the broken accents of His people's confession and repentance (*vv.* 21 ff.)—than He welcomes them with open arms. Only they

[1] These verses are the natural sequel to *v.* 5. The intervening section (iii. 6–18) is a later prophecy, mainly from Jeremiah's own pen, on the restoration of North Israel. Cf. p. 165.

must put away their uncleanness, and live a new life of purity, love and truth.

Thus saith Jahweh to the men of Judah,
And the dwellers in Jerusalem:
Break up your fallow ground,
And sow not among thorns!

Circumcise yourselves unto Jahweh,
And remove the foreskin of your heart;
Lest my wrath go forth like fire,
And burn with none to quench it! (iv. 3f.).

Since the people refuse to hear, Jahweh must Himself drive the ploughshare over their hearts; and in the Scythian hordes now swiftly descending on Palestine he sees the implement Divinely prepared and whetted for the work of repentance. In verses of amazing strength and vividness he depicts the coming ordeal.

Blow trumpet through the land,
Proclaim aloud:
Assemble, and let us go
To the fenced cities!

Set up a signal toward Zion;
Seek refuge, stay not!
For evil I bring from the North,
Even great destruction.

A lion is up from his thicket,
Making havoc of nations:
He is forth, he is gone from his place,
To lay waste the earth.[1]

---

[1] Instead of אַרְצֵךְ, *thy land*, read הָאָרֶץ, *the earth*, as demanded by the previous reference to the nations. The text is further expanded by a picture of the desolation.

Therefore gird you with sackcloth,
Lament and wail!
For the fierce wrath of Jahweh
Is not turned back from us (*vv.* 5–8).

A sirocco from the desert heights
Doth come on my people —
No wind to fan or cleanse,
Too full for this![1]

Behold! he mounteth as clouds,
Like the whirlwind his chariots;
His horses are swifter than eagles:
Woe on us! for we are spoiled.[2]

Hark! a voice brings word from Dan,
Tells of evil from Mount Ephraim;
Makes it known among the nations,
Declares it to Jerusalem:[3]

Lo! panthers[4] *come*
From a distant land;
They have sent out their voice
To the cities of Judah.

On the fields they lie in wait[5]
All round against her;
For she hath rebelled against me,
Is the Rede of Jahweh (*vv.* 11–17).

A terrible closing passage unveils the full horror of the impending desolation.

[1] Here, too, the text has been somewhat expanded.

[2] The appeal in *v.* 14 seems too violent an interruption of the context.

[3] In harmony with the preceding lines, I have read the verbs as participles.

[4] For the quite unsuitable נֹצְרִים, *watchers* (perhaps suggested by *v.* 17), I have followed Duhm in reading נְמֵרִים, *leopards* or *panthers* (cf. v. 6).

[5] Read probably שֹׁמְרִים עַל־שָׂדַי.

I looked at the earth,
And lo! it was chaos;
I looked at the heavens,
And their light was gone.

I looked at the mountains,
And lo! they trembled;
And all the hills
Moved to and fro.

I looked at the tilth,[1]
And lo! there was no man;
And all the birds
Of heaven had fled.

I looked at the orchard land,
And lo! it was desert;
And all its cities were ravaged
Before Jahweh's fierce wrath (*vv.* 23–26).

If the sin of the rural cities and villages could be purged only by the fires of destruction, Jerusalem appeared to the prophet in no better case.[2] Search as he might through the streets of Jerusalem, he could find no man that did justly, none that sought truth and honesty (v. 1). With one accord both high-born and lowly had 'broken the yoke and burst the bonds' (*v.* 5), swearing by false gods and committing adultery (*v.* 7), their houses full of fraud, as a cage is full of birds (*v.* 27). Jerusalem was like a

[1] Insert הָאֲדָמָה, or the like.

[2] Duhm supposes that Jeremiah has now transferred his residence to the capital, and compares his first impressions of Jerusalem with Luther's emotions on entering Rome. But Anathoth was so near Jerusalem that the prophet must have known it from early youth. His definite migration to the capital is more probably connected with the Deuteronomic campaign (cf. pp. 177f.).

foul well, bubbling over with wickedness (vi. 7). And the most grievous aspect of the case was that the priests and prophets were ringleaders in iniquity.

An awful and horrible thing
Is come to pass in the land:
The prophets prophesy falsely,
And the priests strike hands with them;
And my people love it so —
But what will ye do in the end thereof? (v. 30f.).

From the least unto the greatest
Every one is given to gain;
And from prophet unto priest
Every one doth practise fraud.
They heal my people's wound
But all too lightly —
Saying, 'Health, health!'
And there is no health (vi. 13f.).

Therefore the holy city also is included in the general calamity soon to visit Judah. On the comely daughter of Zion, as on her ruder sisters in the country, 'evil looks from the North, even great destruction.'

O the fair and pleasant Height
Of the daughter of Zion!
Against her shall shepherds come,
They and their flocks.

They shall pitch their tents around her,
And graze where they camp.
'Prepare[1] *ye war against her;*
Up! let us storm her at noonday!'

[1] The word is literally 'sanctify,' war being a real part of religion.

Ah, woe! the day declineth,
The shadows of evening lengthen.
'Then up! let us storm her by night,
And destroy her palaces!'[1] (vi. 2–5).

It is vain for Jerusalem to appeal to Jahweh for help: her sins have alienated His soul, and He it is that has planned her destruction (*v.* 8). He set watchmen over her children, but they refused to listen to the warning notes of the trumpet (*v.* 17); now He must speak to them by fire and sword.

Thus saith Jahweh:

Behold! a people doth come
From the North country;
A nation doth bestir itself
From the ends of the earth.

The bow and spear they grasp,
And cruel are they;
* * *
And they show no mercy.

Like the sea their voice doth roar,
And they ride on horses,
Arrayed as a man of war
Against thee, daughter of Zion.[2]

Go not out to the field,
Nor walk in the street!
For there is the sword of the foeman,
Terror around.

O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth,
And wallow in ashes!

---

[1] These dramatic interchanges of speech express the enemy's determination to storm the city whenever the opportunity comes, by day or by night.

[2] *V.* 24 is a reflective comment, interrupting the vivid description.

Make thee mourning as for an only son,
Wailing most bitter!
For suddenly doth come
The spoiler upon us (*vv.* 22–26).

There is nothing even in Amos to surpass the severity of such words. In denouncing ruin on Jerusalem he has broken altogether with the prophetic tradition of Isaiah's school. But, whereas Isaiah declared his message from the Olympian heights of his own unwavering faith, and Amos allowed no feelings of sympathy to deflect him from the straight path of duty, Jeremiah was a man of the people, who was touched by an overwhelming compassion for them, and could never dissociate his personal emotions from his prophetic word. Even while he poured forth his oracles of woe, his heart was tortured at the thought of his people's sufferings.

My bowels! my bowels! I writhe in anguish!
O the walls of my heart!
My heart is in tumult within me;
I cannot keep silent!

For I hear the sound of the trumpet,
The alarum of war;
Ruin doth break upon ruin,
For the whole land is spoiled.

Of a sudden my tents are destroyed,
In a moment my curtains!
How long must I see the standard,
Hear the sound of the trumpet? (iv. 19–21).

But the revelation of Jahweh's word moved him

as deeply. It was like a fire in his bones, burning to find expression. Thus the sight of Jerusalem's wickedness roused him to a fury of wrath.

I am full of the fury of Jahweh,
I am weary with holding it:
I must pour it upon the children in the street,
And the assembly of young men together.

Both husband and wife shall be taken,
Even the aged and full of days;
And their houses shall be turned unto strangers,
And their fields to the conquerors[1] (vi. 11f.).

This twofold sympathy of the prophet—sympathy for his people and a yet deeper sympathy with Jahweh's purpose—made him the moral 'trier' or assayer of Judah. As lead draws out the silver in the crucible, he sought by sympathy to draw out what was good in the people's heart, and then again by the hot blast of Jahweh's wrath to separate the pure metal from its alloy.[2] But his efforts were fruitless. Let him blow the bellows as fiercely as he might—scorch it even black with the flames—the base alloy would not remove. Judah remained the same raw mass of moral corruption and revolt

[1] Read לְיוֹרְשִׁים, as in the variant viii. 10.

[2] The imagery in this difficult passage is taken from the ancient process of refining gold or silver. 'Before quicksilver was known lead was mixed with the alloy which had to be purified, and the mixture was melted, then the bellows forced air on it. The lead was thus oxidized and formed a flux for the impurities' (Peake, *Jeremiah*, i. 145). A somewhat fuller description of the process is given in Gillies' *Jeremiah: the Man and his Message*, pp. 84f. Cf. also Driver, *Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, p. 39.

(*vv.* 27–29). The fate of her rebellious sister Israel had no effect on her. Treacherous Judah had even shown herself more guilty than apostate Israel, and must suffer the same fate, while apostate Israel returned to Jahweh, and found Him merciful and good.

Return, apostate Israel,
Unto me, saith Jahweh!
No more will I frown on thee,
For I am merciful.

I will keep not my wrath for ever,
If thou only acknowledge thy guilt—
That thou hast been faithless
Unto Jahweh thy God.

Thou hast lavished thy love[1] *upon strangers*
Under every green tree;
But to my voice thou hast hearkened not,
Is the Rede of Jahweh (iii. 12f.).[2]

---

[1] For דְּרָכַיִךְ, *thy ways*, read דּוֹדַיִךְ, *thy love*.

[2] The whole passage, iii. 6–18, is an intrusion in its present context; but the main part of it (*vv.* 6–13) belongs to the earlier period of Jeremiah's ministry, doubtless before the Deuteronomic reform. The appendix (*vv.* 14–18) is a prophecy of restoration, which clearly presupposes the Exile.

CHAPTER XIII

Nahum the Patriot

THE immediate future was very different from Jeremiah's expectations. The Southward flow of Scythian invasion swiftly receded, the real deluge sweeping over the powerful nations to the East. Moreover, the great colossus which had so long crushed the national spirit of Judah was unmistakably crumbling to ruin.

The death of Sennacherib left the Assyrian power unimpaired. His son Esarhaddon (681–668 B.C.) even raised it to a higher pinnacle of glory, carrying his arms in triumph over Tyre and Sidon, the kings of the Hittites, Media and Egypt, advancing as far as Memphis, and organizing the conquered territory into an Assyrian province. The great Asshurbanipal (668–626) added fresh lustre to the Empire, extending its sway over Elam and Armenia, stamping out the embers of revolt, and striking terror into the heart of Egypt by the capture of No-Amon or Thebes, the splendid capital of the Delta (663 B.C.). But an Empire built by the sword could only be upheld by the sword; and the two feeble reigns of Asshur-etil-ili (626–620) and Sin-

shar-ishkun (620–607) brought it to an end. The heroic Chaldean king Nabopolassar won the independence of Babylon within five years of Asshurbanipal's death (*c.* 612–11). Meantime the young power of the Medes was pressing hard on Assyria from the West. A gallant attack by Phraortes (*c.* 635 B.C.) proved fatal to himself and the flower of his army, and a second attempt by his son Cyaxares (*c.* 624) was frustrated mainly through the Scythian irruption into Media.[1] That danger laid, Cyaxares was able to resume the assault. Nineveh seems to have offered a heroic resistance; but the strength of the Empire was sapped, and about the year 607 B.C. the haughty city fell, to the delirious joy of all the peoples that had suffered from its tyranny. So complete was the overthrow that, when Xenophon marched past the ruins on his memorable Retreat (401 B.C.), the very name of Nineveh was forgotten, and there lingered among the peasantry but vague traditions of a city whose inhabitants Zeus rendered senseless, 'and so it was taken.'[2]

The approaching fall of Nineveh was hailed by a Jewish prophet with an outburst of triumphant song. In the person of Nahum prophecy is identified with national patriotism. The earlier prophets had turned the fierce light of Divine judgment on their

[1] Cf. Herod. i. 103–106.
[2] Xen. *Anabasis*, III. iv. 6.

own people; Nahum has eyes for nothing but the destruction of the oppressor. With eager interest he has watched the crippling of the old Lion, and now that he sees him at bay in his den, and his defences passing one by one into the hands of the hunter, the whole ardour of his Jewish soul kindles within him, and he pours forth his torrent of glowing lava.

Nahum was a native of Elkosh, a small village near Eleutheropolis, in the ancient domain of Simeon.[1] His prophecy was most probably delivered about the year 610 B.C., when the toils were fast closing around Nineveh.[2] It is a perfect mirror

[1] On the ground of Nahum's vivid descriptions of the siege of Nineveh, a number of recent scholars have identified Elkosh with the village of Al-Kush, some twenty-five miles N. of Mosul (the site of ancient Nineveh), where the natives still show a 'simple plaster box' (Layard) as the supposed tomb of Nahum. The tradition of Nahum's residence in Al-Kush, however, goes no further back than the sixteenth century A.D. The argument from vividness is equally indecisive. The prophet is as vivid in his picture of No-Amon by the Nile (iii. 8ff.). In both cases emotional intensity wings his words, and this appears to flow directly from the heart of Judah.

[2] The date of Nahum can be brought within measurable limits. The reference to No-Amon presupposes the fall of that city in 663 B.C., while the *terminus ad quem* is fixed by the destruction of Nineveh itself in 607. The prophecy has been related to all three assaults on the city, but in every respect it agrees best with the final campaign of Cyaxares. As Wellhausen pertinently remarks, 'But for Herodotus it would never have occurred to any one to doubt that the prophecy of Nahum coincides with the downfall of Nineveh' (*Kl. Proph.*, p. 160).

of the coming tragedy. The style is extraordinarily brilliant—swift, vivid, realistic and dramatic, image jostling on image as the prophet conjures up the rapidly changing scenes—while the language blazes and storms with the sheen of arms and the raging of war-chariots in the assault of the city. We can hear the crack of the whip and the rattle of wheels, see the flash of the sword and the glitter of spears, watch Nineveh fast ebbing away like a pool of waters, and follow the fugitives in their vain flight to the mountains, while their king and nobles sleep their last sleep amid the ruins.

The very theme of Nahum's prophecy forbids it reaching the spiritual heights of an Isaiah or Jeremiah. There is no direct religious message in the book at all. In many ways Nahum recalls the 'false prophets' with whom Jeremiah had to wage so resolute a battle. But he has a true feeling for humanity as the vital expression of religion. His wrath against Nineveh is largely inspired by this feeling. Nineveh is the city of blood, 'full of lies and rapine;' the den of lions, soaked with the blood of its victims; the 'mistress of witchcraft,' that has ruined the nations by her harlotries, and tribes by her charms. Thus the laws of God and man require her blood. The downfall of Nineveh is the most impressive example in ancient history of the working out of the laws of righteousness, as they exalt the meek and strike down the tyrant; and in reading the lesson

so clearly Nahum becomes the prophet not only of patriotism, but of humanity.[1]

In his first oracle he recalls the mischief that Sennacherib devised against Jahweh and His people, and declares the near extinction of his race. Already the Hammer is raised to smite the blood-stained walls; the chariots and horsemen are equipped in all the glory of war; and anon they will rage through the broadways, and storm the stronghold, and send up in smoke 'the lair of the lions,' while its denizens are devoured by the sword.

Ah! full . . . [2]
Came there not out of thee
One that planned evil against Jahweh,
That counselled villainy? [3]

Now Jahweh hath ordered concerning thee,
'No more of thy name shall be sown; [4]
From the house of thy gods will I cut off image and idol,
And thy grave will I make a dishonour.'

---

[1] The genuine prophecies of Nahum are prefaced by an eschatological acrostic on the vengeance of Jahweh (i. 2–10), and a song of comfort for Judah in the style of Deutero-Isaiah (i. 12f. 15; ii. 2). The prophecies are two in number, the first contained in i. 11, 14, ii. 1, 3–13, and the second covering the whole of ch. iii., the theme of both being the destruction of Nineveh.

[2] The opening *stichos* is evidently concealed in the tangle of i. 10. Duhm ingeniously extracts הוֹי סְבַךְ לְבִיאִים מָלֵא, *Ah! thicket full of lions* (cf. ii. 11ff).

[3] The reference is clearly to Sennacherib.

[4] That is, *Thy people shall be wholly extinguished.* Kittel, however, reads לֹא יִזָּכֵר שִׁמְךָ, *Thy name shall be no more remembered.*

Against thee is come the Destroyer —
Mount guard on the rampart!
Watch the way, strengthen thy loins;
Brace thy might to the utmost!

The shield of his warriors is blood-red,
Their blades are as fire; [1]
His soldiers are clothed in scarlet
On the day they equip them.

The chariots and chargers
Rage through the streets;
Onward they rush and plunge
Over the broadways. [2]

Their look is like torches,
As lightning they dart;
Straightforward their nobles gallop
Along their courses. [3]

On to the wall they speed,
They set up the mantlet;
The river gates are opened,
The palace melts (in terror).

Unveiled the Queen is brought out,
Her maidens with her,
Moaning with voice like doves,
Beating their breasts.

Like a pool of water is Nineveh,
Fast ebbing away:
Stand fast! stand fast!' they cry,
But no one turns back.

---

[1] I have followed Duhm in reading כְּאֵשׁ פְּלָדוֹת immediately after the first *stichos*, and בְּיוֹם הֲכִינוֹ in connexion with the third. This arrangement helps the sequel as well

[2] The streets and broadways are of course those of the suburbs of Nineveh.

[3] Here too the best emendation of the MT is Duhm's יִדְהֲרוּ אַדִּירָיו יְאֻשְּׁרוּ בַּהּ.

Silver and gold they plunder,
No end to the store of them;
Full measure they carry forth[1]
Of all the goodly things.

There is emptiness, wasting and void,
A melting heart and knocking of knees;
There is cramp in every limb,
And the faces of all become livid.

Where now is the haunt of the lions,
The den of their young ones,
Where the lion's whelp was wont to withdraw,
With none to affright him?

Enough for his whelps did the lion tear,
And did rend for his lionesses;
He filled his caves with prey,
His dens with ravin.

But lo! I am against thee,
Saith Jahweh of hosts;
And thy lair will I burn with fire,
While the sword devoureth thy young ones.

And thy booty will I cut
From off the earth;
And no more shall sound be heard
From (the mouth of) thy lionesses.[2]

The second ode is still more pregnant with doom. The nations have already caught up the taunt-song, and accompany the fugitives with clapping of hands and contemptuous jeers.

Ah! city of blood throughout,
Full of lies and rapine;
Where booty never ceased,
Nor was end to the prey!

---

[1] It is necessary to fill up the lacuna in some such way as this. It seems better also to read the indicative mood.

[2] Read מִלְּבַאתֵךְ.

Hear the crack of the whip and the rattle of wheels,
With galloping horse;
And chariots bounding,
Horsemen charging!

See the flash of the sword and the glitter of spear,
And a multitude slain;
Even a mass of corpses unending —
Men stumble on carcases.

For the fair one's many harlotries,
That mistress of witchcraft,
Who seduced nations by her whoredoms,
And tribes by her charms.

Lo! I am against thee, saith Jahweh,
And thy skirts will uncover;
I will show the nations thy nakedness,
The kingdoms thy shame.

And filth will I cast upon thee,
And make thee a gazing-stock;
And every one that seeth thee
Shall flee from thee;

And shall say, 'Undone is Nineveh,
Who will lament for her?
Whence shall I seek out
Comforters for her?'

Art thou better than No-Amon,
That sat by the Nile streams,
The waters around her for rampart,
Her wall the sea?

Her strength was Ethiopia,
And countless Egyptians;
Put and the Libyans
Were there for her helpers.

Even she was for exile,
Went forth to captivity,
Even her infants were dashed in pieces
At every street corner.

O'er all her honoured ones
Men cast the lot;
And all her great ones
Were shackled in chains.

Thou too shalt be drunken,
Thou shalt be faint;
Thou too shalt seek
Escape from the foe.

All thy fortresses are fig trees,
Thy people are first-figs;
Be they shaken, they fall
To the mouth of the eater.

Lo! thy people within thee are women
Before the foe;
The gates of thy land lie open,
Thy bars burnt with fire.

Siege waters draw thee,
Strengthen thy forts!
Trample the clay, tread the mortar,
Lay hold of the brick-mould!

There doth the fire devour thee,
The sword doth consume thee;
No healing is there for thy wound,
Thy hurt is incurable.[1]

Make thyself many as the grasshopper,
Many as the locust-swarms,
That hive on the garden walls
In the cool of the day!

Yet the locust doth open his wings,
And flieth away;[2]

---

[1] I have transferred *v.* 19*a* to its natural position in the poem.

[2] The text has been encumbered with certain applications of the figure to the merchants and nobles of Nineveh; the two couplets appear also to have been transposed. As rendered above, the flight of the locust-swarms suggests the melting away of the Ninevites before the enemy.

When the sun shineth out, they flee—
One knoweth not whither.

Ah! how do thy shepherds slumber,[1]
Thy nobles sleep!
Thy people are strewn o'er the mountains,
And no one to gather them!

All they that hear thy tidings
Clap hands over thee;
For on whom hath not thy villainy
Passed without ceasing?

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[1] The text has been expanded by a marginal identification of the 'shepherds' with the king of Assyria. The idea is correct, though the princes of the palace may also be included.

CHAPTER XIV

Jeremiah and his Contemporaries

WHILE the skies were thus clearing in the East, a wave of religious revival swept over Judah. During the years of reaction earnest spirits had been quietly infusing the old Book of the Covenant with the pure wine of prophecy, and the discovery of this 'Renewed Law'—Deuteronomy—in 621 B.C. was the signal for a thoroughgoing Reformation both in cultus and in morals. Under the direct auspices of king Josiah the gross abominations which had invaded the worship of Jahweh were purged away, the horses of the sun and altars to the heavenly bodies removed from the Temple, and the houses of the sodomites demolished; the furnace of Topheth was defiled, 'so that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Melech,' and the high places around Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah were destroyed, the king entering into a covenant with his people 'to walk after Jahweh's mind, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all their heart and with all their soul—to perform the words of this

Covenant that were written in this book' (2 Kings xxiii. 1ff.).

A moral enthusiast like Jeremiah must have followed these movements with profound sympathy and hope. The repentance he had longed for, but which seemed so impossible of realization, had all of a sudden appeared; and it needed only that repentance should pierce the quick of the conscience for Judah to be converted into a people of the living God. Borne up by this high faith Jeremiah appears to have gone on a missionary campaign among the cities of Judah urging upon them the acceptance of the Covenant, and warning them of the fate that had befallen their fathers of old (Jer. xi. 1ff.).[1] But his

[1] From the difference in standpoint between Jeremiah's maturer prophecies and the book of Deuteronomy, it has been argued by a number of scholars, notably Davidson and Duhm, that his attitude towards the reformers was from the first one of more or less pronounced hostility. But in spite of external differences there existed a real spiritual affinity between Jeremiah and the Deuteronomists. They had the same elevated conceptions of Jahweh's holiness, the same pure standard of morality, and the same hatred of idolatry. Nor is the fundamental contrast in principle between Deuteronomy and the New Covenant of Jeremiah any conclusive evidence against his earlier participation in the Deuteronomic movement. Rather, his experience in connexion with that movement showed him how impotent all such external covenants must be, and thus led him towards the thought of a New Covenant of spirit and truth. Jeremiah's interest in the Deuteronomic reform, with its abolition of the high places, affords also the best explanation of the persecution he endured at the hands of the men of Anathoth, who deeply cherished their historic sanctuary, and regarded the young prophet's demand for its destruction as no other

enthusiasm was soon chilled. Instead of the welcome he expected as the messenger of salvation, the preaching of the Covenant won him but hatred and persecution, especially at the hands of his own fellow-villagers in Anathoth, who thought to 'cut down the tree with its sap'—to destroy him in his fresh vigour and rich promise of fruit (xi. 18ff.). Far earlier than others, too, he saw the hollowness of the Reformation. Under cover of religious zeal old evils persisted, while the revival itself was like the seed sown on rocky ground, that shoots up rapidly, and for a season waves joyously in the sunshine, but at the first breath of tribulation or danger withers and dies.

The crisis came through the death of Josiah in his reckless encounter with Pharaoh Necho at the battle of Megiddo (608 B.C.). The fate of the king who had played the foremost part in the Reformation seemed like the Divine condemnation of the whole reforming policy. Thus enthusiasm for the Covenant gave way to another strong tide of reaction, against which Jeremiah had to stand alone, preaching the word of Jahweh with the most passionate sincerity, but meeting persistent opposition and persecution, until his lips were sealed in death.

As early as the first year of Jehoiakim's reign,

than treason against his people and their faith. Probably this persecution led to his definite migration to Jerusalem, the scene of his subsequent ministry.

within a few months of the disaster at Megiddo, the prophet came into sharp conflict with the popular religion of his time. Still staggering under the shock of Josiah's death and the sad fate of his successor Jehoahaz—a helpless exile in Egypt—the people of Jerusalem were gathered in the Temple courts, lashing up their courage by the fanatical repetitions to which Oriental nations are given: 'The Temple of Jahweh, the Temple of Jahweh, the Temple of Jahweh, is this' (Jer. vii. 4). To Jeremiah these were lying words in which they trusted, and under Divine impulse he met them at the Temple gate with his bold challenge: 'Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, walking after other gods whom ye have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house over which my name is called, and say, We are safe from all evil—in order, forsooth, to do all these abominations! Is this house over which my name is called become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold! I too have seen it, saith Jahweh. I pray you, then, go to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel! And now because ye have done all these works, saith Jahweh, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not, and calling unto you, but ye answered not, I will do unto this house over

which my name is called, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I did unto Shiloh. And I will cast you out from before my face, as I cast out your brethren, even all the seed of Ephraim' (*vv.* 9ff.).

This conflict between Jeremiah and the people of Jerusalem—continued with more or less intensity during the whole period of Judah's decline—marks the fundamental contrast between *true and false religion.*

The sin against which the prophet contended was not strictly irreligion, or definite rejection of Jahweh. The people of Jerusalem were inspired by an almost frenzied trust in Him and His temple, and loved to render Him the service of rich and abundant sacrifice. Only they allowed such service to outbalance 'the weightier matters of the law.' To the zealous worshippers in the Temple the outward ritual was virtually the end and object of religion. If they performed their worship according to the letter of the Law, they felt they had discharged their full obligation to God, and thereby secured His abiding presence and blessing, irrespective of their moral conduct. If He regarded their doings at all, He would deal kindly with them—for He was their God, and they His people. Or even if He cherished a certain animosity against them for their breaches of the Covenant, He must surely be satisfied by the sin-offerings they brought Him. With such

offerings the gods of other nations, at least, were content.

Against all this lifeless ritualism and laxity of faith and morals Jeremiah consistently maintained the spirituality and holiness of Jahweh. He was no easy-going God, like His neighbours Baal and Chemosh and Melech, but the jealous One, who could tolerate no other god beside Him, and whose only worthy service was the pursuit of justice, love and truth. On the day He led their fathers out of the land of Egypt, He gave them no law regarding burnt-offerings or sacrifice, but this one thing He commanded them, saying, 'Hear my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you' (vii. 22f.). To appear before such a God, and offer Him the sacrifice of bullocks and rams with blood-stained hands, was blasphemy. And those who made the mere possession of the Covenant their plea for acceptance with Him were falsifying the Law (viii. 8f.). Only if they amended their ways and their doings, and from this time forward 'thoroughly executed judgment between a man and his neighbour, and refrained from oppressing the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and from shedding innocent blood in this place, and from walking after other gods to their own hurt, would He cause them to dwell securely in this land which He gave to their fathers;'

otherwise He must cast them off from being His people, and include themselves, their city and their Temple, in one common ruin (vii. 5–7 ; cf. xxvi. 4ff.).

Words of warning and appeal were alike in vain. The people went their own way, plunging still more deeply into the slough of their iniquities, and ' sliding back by a perpetual backsliding ' (viii. 5). They bent their tongue as a bow for falsehood, they supplanted one another, and ruined each his neighbour's name by slander ; their tongue was a deadly arrow, even while they spoke peace with their mouths (ix. 3–8). Therefore, thus saith Jahweh, Jerusalem shall be laid in heaps and made a lair of jackals, while the cities of Judah lie desolate, without inhabitant (*v.* 11), and over their ruins the coronach is raised.

Consider ye now, and call
For the mourning women ;
Yea, send ye for the knowing ones,
That they may come !

E'en let them haste, and raise
The dirge upon us,
That our eyes may run with tears,
Our eyelids gush with waters !

Hark ! the sound of wailing from Zion,
How are we spoiled !
We are greatly confounded,[1]
For our dwellings are flung down !

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[1] I have omitted the disturbing phrase, ' Because we have left the land.' On the difficulties connected with the phrase, cf. Peake, *Jeremiah*, i. 168.

Hear then, ye women, the Rede of Jahweh,
Let your ears receive the word of His mouth!
And teach your daughters wailing,
Each one her neighbour a dirge:

'Death is come up to our windows,
It hath entered our palaces —
To cut off the child from the street,
The young men from the broadways.

'And the corpses of men shall fall
Like dung on the field,
Or as sheaves behind the reaper,
With none to gather them' (*vv.* 17–22).

Ever more hopeless became the prophet's efforts after redemption. Israel was like a loin-cloth soaked in the foul waters of the Euphrates,[1] and therefore to be cast away as 'good for nothing' (xiii. 1ff.). Repentance seemed no longer possible, and the clouds grew big with doom.

Can the Cushite change his skin,
Or the leopard his spots?
Then mayst thou[2] *also do good,*
That art used to do evil!

I will toss thee like passing stubble
To the wind of the wilderness:
This is thy lot and thy meed apportioned
Of me, saith Jahweh (xiii. 23–25).

The sin of Judah is written
With iron pen,
Engraven with point of diamond
On the tablet of their heart.

[1] The Perath of the text is probably Parah (Josh. xviii. 23), the modern Wady Fara, a rocky stream three miles NE. of Anathoth; but the name was no doubt intended to suggest the Euphrates, whence alien influence had overwhelmed Judah like a flood (cf. Isa. viii. 7f.).

[2] Read the 2nd. pers. sing. throughout.

It is found on the horns[1] *of their altars,*
Under every green tree;
On the high hill-tops,
And the mountains of the field.

So thy substance and all thy treasures
Will I give for spoil,
As the price of all thy sin
Throughout thy borders.[2]

And thy foes will I make thee to serve
In a land thou knowest not;
For a fire is lit in my wrath,
That shall burn for ever (xvii. 1–4).

Ask ye among the nations,
Who hath heard such things?
The virgin of Israel hath done
A deed of sheer horror.

Will the hoar frost fall from Sirion,
The snow from Lebanon?
Will the mountain waters be dried,
That flow down cold?[3]

But me have my people forgotten,
And burn incense to vanity;
They stumble on by-paths,[4]
That have not been cast.

So their land shall be made an astonishment,
A perpetual hissing;
Every one passing thereby shall be astonished,
And shall shake his head.

I will scatter them as with the East wind
Before the foe;
I will show them the back, and not the face,
On the day of their downfall (xviii. 13–17).

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[1] Read נִמְצָא עַל־קַרְנוֹת, or similar words.

[2] The true text is recovered from the parallel passage, xv. 13f. somewhat amended (cf. Kittel's notes).

[3] On the emendations here assumed cf. Kittel.

[4] The text here is considerably overladen. I have retained the most significant element in the thought.

In the course of these years of growing estrangement Jeremiah fought many a fierce battle with the official prophets of Jerusalem, on whom he laid the blame of the people's waywardness. The most deliberate and sustained attack is delivered in ch. xxiii., which may be regarded as the *locus classicus* on a somewhat obscure subject. Here Jeremiah brings three principal charges against the prophets. In the first place, they had no personal knowledge of God. To quote Jeremiah's fine image, they had never stood in the council-chamber of Jahweh (*v.* 22)—had never entered into direct touch with Him, or felt His Spirit moving in their hearts. Thus they harped continually on the same old string, merely repeating what former prophets had declared, and 'stealing Jahweh's words every one from his neighbour' (*v.* 30), instead of waiting upon Jahweh Himself, and from His never-failing treasury bringing forth things new and old. Hence, also, they had no real message for their generation, but glossed over truth and judgment by honeyed words of peace. 'They say continually unto them that despise the word of Jahweh, It shall be well with you; and unto every one that walketh in the stubbornness of his own heart they say, No evil shall come upon you' (*v.* 17). With such time-serving went actual immorality. Careless of their sacred responsibilities, the prophets not merely winked at the self-indulgence, profanity and

vicious pleasures of the people, but took an active part in the same follies, thus setting an example of evil instead of good. Not even the grossest pollutions of the time found them clean. 'In the prophets of Jerusalem have I seen an horrible thing: they commit adultery and walk in lies, they strengthen the hands of evil-doers that none doth turn from his wickedness; . . . and from them is ungodliness gone forth into all the land' (*vv.* 14f.)

We have here sharply defined the contrast between *true and false prophecy*.

To their contemporaries the 'prophets of Jerusalem' appeared as anything but false, and they themselves would have rejected the epithet with indignation. In their own eyes they were the true prophets, while their antagonist was an intruder on a sacred office to which he had no claim. They felt toward Jeremiah much as the professional cleric, solemnly ordained into the Apostolic succession of the priesthood, would feel towards a layman who should dare to preach in his preserve, and should actually use his position to charge him with falsehood. Jeremiah laid all the emphasis on the *spirit* of prophecy. For him the false prophet was the literalist, the traditionalist, who clung to the past, and refused to advance in the knowledge of God, the moderate, who preached the gospel of easy morals and comfortable peace, and himself followed the doctrine he taught; the true prophet was the

progressive, who drank of the living wells of religion and thus continually advanced in knowledge and grace, the earnest moralist, whose word was no vain repetition of an empty 'dream,' but a fire that pierced to the conscience of his hearers, or a hammer that broke the stoniest heart in pieces (*v.* 29).

In his earlier controversies with the prophets and people Jeremiah had been supported by the rulers of Jerusalem. Thus, when a charge of treason was laid against him for his address at the Temple gate, the princes saved him on the ground that he had spoken in the name of Jahweh (xxvi. 16). But the prophet was soon involved in conflict as deadly with the king and rulers. The power of Assyria had been extinguished by Cyaxares, ~~about the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign~~ as we have seen, in the year 612 B.C. Seven ~~Three~~ years later Nebuchadrezzar crushed the forces of Pharaoh Necho at the world-historic battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.). When the young conqueror should naturally have carried his victorious arms Southward to Egypt, his father Nabopolassar died, and he was compelled to return by swift marches to Babylon. All round the horizon, then, fortune continued to smile upon Judah. It seemed to the infatuated people that Jahweh had stretched forth His hand in their favour, and they had nothing more to fear. But again the words of Jeremiah struck a note of discord into their joy. The sin of Judah was too deep-seated to be thus

easily healed. Before better days could come, the cancer must be cut to the roots. And from the moment when Nebuchadrezzar appeared on the horizon of history Jeremiah saw in him 'the servant of Jahweh,' who should apply the surgeon's knife to His people. Some few months after the battle of Carchemish he wrote out all the words he had spoken against Judah and Jerusalem since his call in the days of Josiah, as a testimony to 'the anger and fury of Jahweh' against their sins; and when this roll was ignominiously cut up and burnt by the king he wrote another, with 'many like words' added to it (xxxvi. 32). The old 'foe from the North' was now definitely identified with Nebuchadrezzar and his Chaldeans. 'Behold! thus saith Jahweh, Because ye have not listened to my words, I will send and take all the clansmen of the North, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof; and I will put them under the ban, and will make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolation. And I will take from them the sound of mirth and the sound of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the candle; and this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment' (xxv. 8ff.).

For two or three years peace reigned in Judah; then Jehoiakim was compelled to purchase safety

by becoming a vassal of Nebuchadrezzar. Soon a wave of passionate patriotism drove him to rebellion. For this Jerusalem had to pay the penalty. A succession of marauding expeditions of Babylonian and Median bands, aided by Israel's bitter enemies the Edomites, vexed and harassed the land; finally in 597 B.C. the Great King himself marched in force against Jerusalem. By this time Jehoiakim was dead, and the sceptre was in the hands of the young, misguided Jehoiachin. The city fell almost without a blow, and the king himself with the flower of his people—the 'good figs,' as Jeremiah describes them (xxiv. 1ff.)—was carried captive to Babylonia, his uncle Mattaniah or Zedekiah replacing him on the throne.

In the fate of Jehoiachin and his kingdom Jeremiah had seen the fulfilment of his prophecies, and his energies were now bent on saving the remnant of Judah. On the new king he urged the duty of quiet resignation; the 'false prophets' who predicted a speedy restoration he forewarned of death (xxviii. 16f.; xxix. 21ff.), while he counselled the exiles to settle down in peace, awaiting God's time for mercy. 'Thus saith Jahweh the God of Israel unto the whole captivity that was carried away captive from Jerusalem: Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give

your daughters to husbands, and multiply there, and be not diminished; and seek the welfare of the land whither I caused you to be carried, and intercede with Jahweh for it, because in the welfare thereof shall your welfare consist' (xxix. 4–7).

While Pharaoh Necho reigned in Egypt, the truce was loyally kept. His successor Psammetichos II was too immersed in national affairs to embark on revolution. With his death in 589, however, the smouldering embers burst into flame. Pharaoh Hophra headed a coalition against the Babylonian tyrant, and Zedekiah was readily induced to join. Once more Nebuchadrezzar descended in fierce wrath against Jerusalem (587 B.C.). After a desperate siege, the strain of which was relieved for one brief moment when Hophra created a diversion in the South, the city was captured, the Temple reduced to ashes, and the main body of the people swept off to join their brethren in Babylonia (July 586).

Jeremiah had steadily counselled the king against rebellion. The sword once drawn, he abandoned all hope of salvation. Jahweh Himself was warring against His people 'with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm'; thus their only chance of escape was to fall away to the Chaldean besiegers (xxi. 3ff.). Egypt was a broken reed to trust in. Pharaoh's army would return the way it came, and the Chaldeans appear again before the city, 'and

take it, and burn it with fire' (xxxvii. 7f.). Thus the prophet's consistent advice, given often at the peril of his life, was: 'Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, that ye may live' (xxvii. 12f.; xxxviii. 14ff., etc.).[1]

This conflict between prophet and king marks the contrast between *true and false*—or *higher and lower*—*patriotism.*

By the people of Jerusalem the kings who offered so stubborn a resistance to the hosts of Nebuchadrezzar were naturally enough honoured as heroes and patriots, while the prophet who counselled surrender was flouted as a base and cowardly traitor, worthy of death. These sentiments are shared by not a few among Jeremiah's modern detractors. Renan, for example, dubs him a fanatic, an anarchist, 'a furious declaimer, who never sacrificed one grain of personal enmity to the good of his country.'[2] But Jeremiah was neither a coward nor a traitor. He loved his native land, and fain would have shared his fellow-prophets' glib assurances of its salvation (xxviii. 6). For him, however, patriotism meant primarily devotion to the moral and religious welfare of the people. This welfare

[1] On the historical order of these chapters, and the critical questions underlying them, cf. the Commentaries of Duhm, Cornill, Erbt and Peake, also J. R. Gillies' fine study of *Jeremiah: the Man and his Message.*

[2] *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, iii. 296 (*E.T.*, iii. 242).

secured, all other good things would be added to them; without it the nation must perish. Like St. Paul, he would gladly have given his own life for his people. Even when the hope of salvation had vanished, he had no thought of deserting them. Through the whole terrible ordeal of the siege and downfall of Jerusalem he remained bravely at his post, striving with all his might to ward off the last and cruellest sufferings of the city, uttering no word of complaint against his persecutors. He showed his patriotism in this, too, that he never despaired of his country. In the course of the siege he redeemed from his cousin the family inheritance in Anathoth at its full value, as a token that 'houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land' (xxxii. 15). And he steadfastly declared that Jerusalem should rise from its ashes to a new and better life.[1]

On the fall of Jerusalem the prophet elected to stay with the poor and distressed 'remnant of Judah,' gathered under the protection of Gedaliah, the son of his old champion Ahikam. When Gedaliah was murdered, he was carried off in the wild

[1] 'The unparalleled greatness of the man lay precisely in this, that the traitor to his country was the patriot of patriots. What he dreamt of, like all his predecessors, was an earthly, national, Jewish fatherland, with a national capital in Jerusalem, and a national dynasty, that of David—but with a law of justice, of piety, of morality, that of Jehovah' (Darmesteter, *Les Prophètes d'Israel*, p. 90).

exodus of the people to Egypt (xliii. 6ff.). We hear him once more pleading with them to turn from their idolatry and vice, but with no greater success than before. ' As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of Jahweh, we will not listen to thee, but will assuredly carry out every word that is gone out of our own mouth—to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour libations to her, as we did, both we and our fathers, in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem ; for then we had plenty of bread, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off burning incense to the Queen of Heaven, and pouring libations to her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by sword and famine ' (xliv. 16ff.). Here Jeremiah passes off the stage of history. Tradition says he was stoned to death by the frenzied Jews—a victim to the persecution he had so long endured.

CHAPTER XV

Jeremiah the Prophet of Personal Religion

The trend of prophecy has been steadily monotheistic. The very conception of an ethical God involved His universal sovereignty. The consequences, however, had not been fully drawn. Even Isaiah's exalted thought of the Holy One was still entangled in national limitations; for the prophet could not conceive of a Kingdom of God without a fixed centre in Zion. Now that the theorem of Zion's inviolability was broken down by the logic of history, three courses remained open: to renounce faith in Jahweh, and fall back on the stronger gods who had dethroned Him, or on blank irreligion and despair; to seek salvation in the non-essentials of religion, that is, outward rites and ceremonies; or to recognize the facts, and take them into the realm of faith—in other words, to free the thought of God from every trace of nationalism, and vindicate His absolute authority, even in the ruin of His people. The latter decisive step Jeremiah took,

and thereby marked the true lines for the subsequent history of religion.

Already in his youthful prophecies, when he could at least contemplate the fall of Jerusalem and its Temple, we catch a glimpse of this broader vision. As the antithesis of true and false faith became more sharply defined, the prophet grasped the principle with clearer consciousness. The actual destruction of the city confirmed his faith. Jahweh could no longer be regarded as the God of two petty states like Israel and Judah, but must be reverenced as the Lord and Ruler of the Universe. In Jeremiah's famous parable, He was the potter who moulded the clay of human character and destiny 'as seemed good to Him,' and could not be frustrated in His purpose even by the warps and flaws in the clay (xviii. 1ff.). In His great design all the nations had their place. The conquering hosts of Nebuchadrezzar were as truly His instruments and servants as the prophets of Israel. Thus the worship of Jahweh could no longer be confined to Zion. In His sight the heathen land of Babylonia was as sacred as the Temple. There, too, His children could find their spiritual home—could lift up their hearts in prayer both for themselves and their oppressors, that they might receive a common blessing—for He was one, and His people one (xxix. 7).

As the conception of Jahweh widened, the circle

of Divine election had been gradually contracted. To the primitive mind of Israel the covenant was with the nation as a whole. In the prophecies of Amos and Hosea it was narrowed down to Judah, and by Isaiah to the 'holy seed.' With Jeremiah the promises passed to the individual seeker after God, and religion became fully and consciously personal.

Jeremiah's theory of personal religion is most clearly explicated in his great prophecy of the New Covenant (xxxi. 31–34).[1]

The old covenant of Sinai and the Renewed Covenant of Deuteronomy had both proved failures. With all their majesty they had never touched the heart of the people, still less inspired genuine obedience. There was something morally oppressive in their hard, stern demands. The spirit might be willing, but the flesh was weak. In his own experience Jeremiah knew that 'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick' (xvii. 9). Thus men continued to do the evil they would not, however much they struggled against it. In the New Covenant the moral emphasis is altered. The commands of the Law are no longer inscribed on tables of stone, or written with pen and ink in a Book, but placed in men's inward parts, and written in their hearts. The Covenant

consists in a loving personal relation to God, based on forgiveness and mutual confidence. Jahweh will no longer treasure against His people the memory of their guilt, but 'will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more'; and the former distrust will pass into friendship and affection. 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people'—a people that now do the works of the Law, not of constraint, but willingly—for the love of God moves them to obedience. The prophet has here advanced almost to the Christian standpoint. 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit' (Rom. viii. 3f.).

It was the personal experience of Jeremiah, however, that gave peculiar tone to his conception of individual religion.

The life story of the prophet, as we have traced it, is a singularly pathetic one. Himself a man of warm human sympathies and affections, he was condemned to spend his active years in bitter conflict with his people, and to see his labours go for nought—to find his glowing words received with indifference and contempt, and his person exposed to deadly persecution, from the day of his first disillusion-

ment at Anathoth till the dark months of the siege of Jerusalem, when he languished in the dungeon, and was saved from death only by the loyalty of a few devoted friends. And all this he had to bear alone. Unlike earlier prophets, such as Hosea and Isaiah, he was forbidden to have wife and children in his home (xvi. 2).[1] Apart from the fidelity of Baruch his secretary and Ebed-Melech the despised Ethiopian eunuch, who lifted him up from the dungeon with cords enfolded in cast-off clouts and rotten rags, to keep his armpits from being chafed (xxxviii. 7ff.), there was nothing to relieve the human forlornness and tragedy of his lot. To outward appearance it spelt absolute failure. There are failures, however, which are the grandest of successes; and Jeremiah's was a shining example. Like the Son of man, of whom he was so pure a prophetic type, he was made perfect by his sufferings. All was lost but faith; and that shone with a brighter radiance because it

[1] With Jeremiah's wistful longing for the sanctities of home-life we may compare the pathetic remark of the modern prophet who most nearly resembles him alike in temper of mind and in his ceaseless struggles after a Republic of God where righteousness should dwell. 'He who through fatality of circumstances has been unable to live the serene life of the Family, beneath the wings of this angel (woman), has a shadow of melancholy resting upon his soul, and a void in his heart which nothing can fill; and I who write these pages for you know it.'—Mazzini, *The Duties of Man*, ch. vi.

had passed through the fires. The persecutions to which he was subjected, the contempt and hatred men felt towards a traitor (as they counted him), the gulf that separated him from his people, the failure of his labours, the consciousness of his own utter weakness, and the depressing sense of loneliness that weighed upon him, all drew him closer to the God who was his only Refuge and Strength. It was in the hour of battle that he realized the meaning of the ' defenced city and wall of brass ' Jahweh had promised to make of him. And the less reliance he could place on human sympathy, the more precious he found this Divine friendship that supported him in hours of need. As Wellhausen says, ' his despised prophecy became for him the bridge to an intimate relation with God. Out of his office as intermediary between Jahweh and Israel, of which Israel would hear nothing, there grew a spiritual relation of personal intimacy between himself and Jahweh, which remained not confined to moments of religious enthusiasm, in which Jahweh revealed Himself through Jeremiah to His people, but consisted rather in the full emptying out of his soul before Jahweh. This was the bread on which he lived. . . . He is the father of true prayer, in which the poor soul expresses alike its overwhelming (*lit.* subhuman) need and its superhuman confidence, its fears and doubts and trust unshakeable. Thus from prophecy emerged

not only the Law, but at the end also personal religion.'[1]

The experience of Jeremiah likewise suggests—though he nowhere directly teaches—the deepest principle of spiritual religion—that the sufferings of the righteous are for the salvation of the sinful.

Before the time of Jeremiah the problem of suffering hardly presents itself. The early faith of Israel was simple and straightforward: Jahweh rewards the good with long life and prosperity, the wicked with misery and untimely death. To minds imbued with this idea the suffering of the righteous was inconceivable. Even in Isaiah there is hardly room for such a thought. The vengeance of Jahweh would fall without mercy on the head of the sinful, but the 'holy seed' would pass through the ordeal unscathed. Now the guilty and the innocent were involved in one common ruin; the innocent suffered equally with the guilty—more cruelly indeed than the guilty, for they had to endure not merely the outward calamities of their people, but the far more exquisite agonies of misconception, doubt and despair that arose from the crisis of faith. We catch the accents of this despair in Jeremiah's expostulations with Jahweh,

[1] Wellhausen, *Isr. u. Jüd. Geschichte*[2], pp. 140f.—probably the most luminous and sympathetic paragraphs ever written on the subject.

when even his brethren and his father's house played false with him.

Too just art Thou, O Lord, that I should contend with Thee,
Yet before Thee would I lay my case:
Why doth the way of the wicked prosper,
Why are they all at ease that deal very treacherously?

Thou didst plant them, and they also took root,
They grow, they bring forth fruit;
Near art Thou in their mouths,
But far from their reins (thoughts).

Yet Thou, Lord, knowest me,
Thou dost see me, and try my heart toward Thee,
Pull them out, then, like sheep for the shambles,
And prepare them for the day of slaughter! (xii. 1–3).

To his agonized pleading the sole answer was the promise of yet graver trials.

If thou hast run with footmen, and they have wearied thee,
How wilt thou vie with horses?
If thou losest thy faith[1] *in a land of security,*
How wilt thou do in the Jungle of Jordan? (*v.* 5).

As he pressed on with his thankless task, the burden seemed often too heavy to bear. If only he could find some 'wayfarer's khan in the desert,' he would gladly leave his people, and flee thither for peace (ix. 2). He laments that his mother ever bore him, 'a man of strife and contention to all the earth' (xv. 10). He curses the day on which he was born (xx. 14ff.). He even charges God with deceiving him.

[1] Read לֹא תִבְטַח, *thou trustest not* (LXX), or possibly בּוֹרֵחַ, *thou thinkest to flee* (Cornill, Peake, etc.).

I have sat not in the assembly of the merry-makers,
Nor rejoiced with them;
Because of Thy hand I sat alone,
For Thou filledst me with indignation.

Why is my pain perpetual,
My wound incurable?
Truly hast Thou been to me like a deceitful stream,
As waters that are not sure! (xv. 17f.).

Thou hast fooled me, O Lord, and I let myself be fooled,
Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed;
I am turned to a laughing-stock all day long,
Every one doth mock me.

As often as I speak, I must cry out,
I must cry, 'Violence and injury!'
For Jahweh's word is become to me
A reproach and derision all the day.

If I say, I will think no more thereon,
Nor speak in His name,
There is in mine heart like a burning fire
Shut up in my bones.

I am weary with holding,
I cannot endure it;
For I hear the slandering of many,
Terror around me.

'Denounce! yea, let us denounce him!'
Say all my friends, who wait for my stumbling;
'Perchance he will be fooled, and we shall o'ercome him,
And take our revenge on him' (xx. 7–10).

Still no light comes on the mystery—only an exhortation to cleanse his heart of all unworthy thoughts, and stand fast by the line of duty.

If thou turn to me, I will restore thee,
And thou shalt stand before me;
And if thou remove the precious from the vile,
Thou shalt be as my mouth.

And unto this people will I make thee
A wall of brass;
And they shall fight against thee,
But shall not o'ercome thee.

For I am with thee,
To save thee, and deliver thee:
I will deliver thee from the hand of the wicked,
And redeem thee from the fist of the terrible (xv. 19–21).

If there is no solution of the problem of pain, its gracious effects are becoming manifest in heart and character. The iron had entered Jeremiah's soul, and strengthened him for his task. At the same time it inspired him with a new sympathy for his people. In his youthful tumult of injured dignity he had been full of the fury of the Lord, and sought to have it poured out on young and old, even the children in the street and the aged that were 'full of days' (vi. 11; xi. 18ff.). Now his heart melts in sorrow for Jerusalem.

My sorrow is incurable,
My heart is faint within me.
Hark! the cry of the daughter of my people
O'er a wide-spread land:
'Is Jahweh not in Zion,
Is her King not within her?'
Yea, but why have they vexed me with images,
With alien vanities?
'The harvest is past, the summer is ended,
And we are not saved!' [1]

[1] In these verses we have dramatic interchanges between the people and Jahweh, followed by Jeremiah's outburst of sympathy.

For the hurt of my people's daughter I go mourning,
Astonishment hath seized me.
Is there no balm in Gilead,
Is there no physician there?
Why is no healing come
To the daughter of my people?
O that my head were waters,
And mine eyes a fountain of tears,
That I might weep day and night
For the slain of my people's daughter! (viii. 18–ix. 1).

When drought parches the land, and the cry of Jerusalem rises to heaven, Jeremiah takes the sin of the people on his own conscience, and in verses quivering with emotion pleads with Jahweh to save.

Judah mourneth,
And the gates thereof languish;
Men sit in blackness on the ground,
And the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.

The nobles have sent their servants to the water,
They come to the cisterns;
They find no water, they return,
With their vessels empty.

The tillers of the ground are dismayed,
For there is no rain;
The ploughmen also are ashamed,
They cover their heads.

The hind in the field calveth, and leaveth (her young),
For there is no grass;
The wild asses pant on the heights,
Their eyes fail for lack of herbage.

Though our sins bear witness against us,
Act, Lord, for Thine own name's sake!
For many are our backslidings,
Against Thee have we sinned.

O Thou, the Hope of Israel,
Her Saviour in time of need,

Why art Thou like a sojourner in the land,
As a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for the night?

Why shouldest Thou be as one fast asleep,
Like a warrior that cannot help?
Yet Thou, Lord, art in the midst of us,
And by Thy name we are called—O leave us not! (xiv. 1–9).

When Jahweh seems to reject his prayer, he continues to intercede. It is not the people's fault that they have fallen away from God, for the prophets have seduced them by 'lying visions' (*vv.* 11ff.). His own eyes run down with tears both day and night for the wound of his people; surely Jahweh cannot look on unmoved!

Mine eyes run down with tears
Both day and night;
They will not cease (from weeping),
So great is the ruin!
The daughter of my people is broken
With a very grievous wound.

If I go forth to the field,
Lo! the slain of the sword;
If I go into the city,
Lo! the sick with famine.
Yea, both prophet and priest
Drag helpless through the land (*vv.* 17f.).

In a final outburst of agony he lays the sin of his people before the Eternal Love, and prays Him 'for His own name's sake' and the memory of the ancient Covenant to forgive them.

Hast Thou utterly rejected Judah,
Hath Thy soul loathed Zion?
Why hast Thou smitten us,
And (there is) no healing for us?

We looked for peace, but no good came —
For a time of healing, but lo! dismay.

We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness,
The guilt of our fathers:
Truly have we sinned against Thee,
Yet abhor us not for Thy name's sake!
Dishonour not the throne of Thy glory:
Remember, and break not Thy covenant with us!

Are there any among the vanities of the nations that can bring rain,
Or can the heavens give showers?
Is it not Thou, Jahweh our God,
For Thou hast made all these things?
Therefore do we wait on Thee,
For Thou alone art our Hope[1] (*vv.* 19–22).

In thus identifying himself with his sinful people—bearing the burden of their guilt upon his conscience, and mediating their approach to the throne of grace—Jeremiah proved himself a true minister of the New Covenant. But his sufferings themselves reacted on the people, and worked for their redemption. Later generations saw in Jeremiah the personal type of the Suffering Servant, wounded and bruised for the sins of others, and by his stripes purchasing their peace. In this respect also he pointed forward to Him 'who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not, but committed His cause to Him that judgeth righteously; who His own self bare our sins in His own body to the tree, that we, having died unto

[1] I have here made a slight transposition of clauses, and completed the thought of the passage (after *v.* 8).

sins, might live unto righteousness' (1 Pet. ii. 23f.).

Hence the closing note of Jeremiah's prophecy is salvation. The Divine Potter cannot allow His work to remain marred and broken. If He crumple the clay in His hand, it is only to mould it anew into a vessel more worthy of His honour. In the land of exile He is even now fashioning His people after the pattern that seemeth good to Him, amending the 'flaws and warpings' that lurk in the clay, tempering them in the furnace of affliction, and making them a thing of beauty in the eyes of all the earth.

The first bright gleam of salvation is centred on Ephraim. Ties of peculiar tenderness bound Jeremiah to the North. His home in Anathoth stood on the border of Benjamin, near the ancestral temple of Shiloh, and his sympathies were all with his exiled kinsfolk. In the early dawn of his ministry he had loved to picture their return to God and the home-land (iii. 12f.); and now that the shadows are closing around him visions of Restoration come to lighten the gloom.

Thus saith Jahweh:

Once in the wilderness I found
A people escaped from the sword;
From afar I appeared unto them,
I went to bring them rest.[1]

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[1] The text here is almost hopelessly corrupt. I have simply given what seems the nearest approach to the sense of the verse.

With a love everlasting I loved thee,
Thus in mercy I drew thee on;
And once more will I build thee, and thou shalt be built,
Virgin daughter of Israel.

Once more shalt thou deck thee with timbrels,
And go out in the dance of the joy-makers;
Once more shalt thou plant thy vineyards on the hills of Samaria,
Thou shalt plant, and enjoy the fruit, and sing praises to Jahweh.[1]

Yea, there cometh a day when the watchmen shall cry,
On the hill of Samaria:
'Arise, let us go up to Zion,
Unto Jahweh our God!' (xxxi. 2–6).

Other sounds are meantime heard from the hill-tops of Ephraim: the bitter lamentations of Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not (*v.* 15). But to the prophet's imagination the death-dirge for Israel melts into the accents of repentance from the heart, and he raises a new song of salvation.

Truly have I heard
Ephraim bemoan himself:

'Thou hast chastened me, and I let myself be chastened,
Like a calf untrained.
Restore me, that I may return,
For Thou art Jahweh my God!

'Because after my chastening I repented,[2]
I smote on my thigh;
I was ashamed, yea confounded,
For I bore the reproach of my youth.'

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[1] On the addition cf. LXX.

[2] The first words of the line are recovered from the following *stichos*.

. Is Ephraim so dear a son,
So delightsome a child,
That as oft as I speak of him,
I remember him still?

Thus do my bowels yearn for him—
I will surely have compassion on him,
Is the Rede of Jahweh (*vv.* 18–20).[1]

But Judah also shall see the salvation of the Lord. In seventy years, when the present sinful brood shall have passed away, their children shall repent and turn unto Jahweh, and shall come back to Zion with songs of rejoicing, and be built up with Ephraim in the midst of the land. Then shall Jahweh enter into the New Covenant 'with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;' and He shall be their God, and they His people; 'and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord! for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jahweh' (xxxi. 31–34). In those days He will raise up a Righteous Shoot of the old stock of David—Jahweh Zidkenu, *Jahweh is our Righteousness*[2]—who shall reign as

[1] These prophecies of Ephraim's return are usually assigned to the same early period as iii. 12f. To the present writer they seem much more appropriate as the introduction to the Covenant of Grace (so also Hölscher, *Die Profeten*, p. 290). In this case they will belong to the dark weeks of the prophet's imprisonment just before the fall of Jerusalem. On the later accretions in chs. xxx.–xxxiii., cf. the Commentaries, *sub loco*.

[2] In the name Jahweh Zidkenu there is probably an allusion to the reigning king Zedekiah, whose name also signifies *Jahweh*

King over the houses of Israel and Judah, and shall 'work right-doing and justice in the land,' so that Judah may be saved, and Israel dwell in peace (xxiii. 5f.). Under His sway the heathen nations also shall be gathered—even those who laid impious hands upon the inheritance of Israel and taught the people to swear by Baal—so that from one end of the earth to the other no God is worshipped but Jahweh, and no sound is heard but praise to His great name (xii. 14–17; xvi. 19f.).[1]

is righteous. The Messianic King fulfils what Zedekiah so conspicuously failed to do.

[1] On the authenticity of the Messianic prophecies of Jeremiah, cf. Peake, *op. cit.*, i. 188, 219, 259f. (based on Cornill's brilliant exposition).

CHAPTER XVI

The Glory of the Lord

WHILE the fortunes of Jerusalem dragged slowly on to ruin, the exiles in Babylonia lay chafing against their fate, invoking heaven's curse on the head of their oppressors, and dreaming of a speedy return. For some years God spoke only through the Cassandra notes of Jeremiah; then a prophet was raised up with the strange new message that the salvation of Zion rested with themselves.

Ezekiel was the son of Buzi, a Zadokite priest of Jerusalem. Born about the year of the Deuteronomic Reformation, and deeply imbued with the spirit of that movement, he appears to have had early at heart the purification of worship in Judah. The preaching of Jeremiah quickened his aspirations; and already perhaps he cherished his visions of a New Jerusalem, cleansed of its idolatry and profaneness, radiating the glory of the Lord to all nations of mankind, when the first invasion of Nebuchadrezzar (597 B.C.) saw him carried captive to the 'land unclean,' with the king and chief priests and rulers of his people. Ezekiel's lot was

cast with the exiles at Tel-Abib[1] on the Chebar, the Grand Canal of Babylonia. The tragedy of his city and people must have borne heavily on a man of his austere temperament and almost morbid imagination. Many an hour of bitter despair he no doubt passed by 'the waters of Babylon,' remembering Zion, and mourning over her downfall, when on the day he notes so precisely—the fifth day of the fourth month of the fifth year of the captivity (July 592), when he was thirty years of age[2]—he was flung into an ecstasy, and in the appearance of a dark cloud with a splendour of light playing around and within it he saw the revelation of the Glory, and found himself called to be a prophet.

Men of finer spiritual feeling than Ezekiel have but suggested the sublime majesty of the experience through which the Holy One drew near to them. He attempts minutely to describe what is indescribable. Thus his imagery strikes us often as fantastic and even grotesque, a carefully studied blend of experience and reflection, bodied forth in symbolical representations drawn from the worship

[1] Tel-Abib, *i.e.* 'the mound of corn-ears.' But the name is doubtless a Hebraising of Tel-Abubu, 'the mound of the flood.' The Chebar is probably the modern Shatt-en-Nil, near which were discovered the archives of the banking firm of Murashu and Sons (464–405 B.C.), containing many Jewish names.

[2] The 'thirtieth year' in the shorter recension (*v.* 1) most probably indicates the prophet's own age.

of the Temple, with added *motifs* from Babylonia. But there is a real spiritual meaning wrapped up in each detail of the picture, for Ezekiel was too serious an artist to load his canvas with mere brush-work. Through sympathetic study of 'the chariot of Jahweh' we are thus put *en rapport* with his conception of the Divine nature, and gain the key to the understanding of his prophetic character and ministry.

The immediate occasion was probably a thunder and lightning storm of surpassing vividness. Borne on the wings of the whirlwind, a great cloud came sweeping from the North, a nimbus of light encircling it, while tongues of fire scintillated within the darkness, glowing and flashing like electron.[1] As the trance fell on Ezekiel, he saw emerging from the flames an appearance as of four living creatures, with the form and hands of a man, their legs unjointed, and the soles of their feet smooth and rounded like calves' feet, each with four faces—that in front the face of a man, those to right and left the faces of a lion and ox, and that behind the face of an eagle—and four wings—two outstretched above to right and left, and two covering the body. Between the four creatures was the semblance of an altar, with fire of burning coals, out of which lightning zigzagged incessantly, and underneath were four wheels, each crossed at right angles by

[1] Electron : a brightly-glowing amalgam of gold and silver.

a companion wheel, resembling 'wheel within wheel,' so that they went straightforward, and 'turned not when they went.' As Ezekiel looked more closely, he saw that these wheels had their felloes 'full of eyes round about.' In each of the wheels the spirit of the living creatures dwelt and moved, so that 'whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went.' Resting on the outstretched wings was the semblance of a firmament, pure as crystal, with a sapphire throne, on which sat One resembling a man in form and dignity, His upper parts shining like electron, while from the loins downward He blazed with flames of fire, and a radiance surrounded His presence like that of the rainbow. And all this was the 'appearance' that unveiled the glory of Jahweh (i. 4ff.).[1]

It is suggestive, at the outset, that Jahweh reveals Himself to Ezekiel in the open face of Nature. This gives him a far freer conception of God's presence than Isaiah had enjoyed. For Ezekiel He was as near to His children, even in those Babylonian cities without a temple, as He had been in the Holy Place at Jerusalem. The elaborate vision of the throne moved hither and thither on rectangular wheels by the Spirit of the four living creatures is clearly intended to bear

[1] The text of Ezek. i. is very seriously damaged by later expansions and corruptions. On the amendments necessary to secure a fitting sense cf. Kittel's notes.

out the same idea of Divine omnipresence. The Eternal Glory may be confined in Person to one particular spot; but the chariot conveys Him instantly to any place in heaven or earth where His Spirit desires to go. The curious description of the felloes full of eyes as unmistakably suggests the omniscience of God. Whithersoever His Spirit leads Him, all things are naked and open in His sight. Nor can we miss the significance of the four-headed creatures on whom the chariot is borne. The imagery is based on the primæval thought of Jahweh riding through the heavens on a cherub, the personification of the storm-cloud (cf. Ps. xviii. 10), with the combination of different faces, emblematic of different qualities of character, which s so marked a feature in the Temple statuary of the Babylonians. The faces of the cherubim are drawn from the four most representative types of the animal kingdom, the human face in front suggesting the dignified personality of the Divine, those of the lion and ox conveying the ideas of lordliness and strength, while that of the eagle is the symbol of exalted majesty or sublimity. God is thus invested with the noblest traits of His creation: in other words, He is the omnipotent One, all-wise, all-good, all-reaching, and all-ruling.

Under imaginative emblems, therefore, Ezekiel has defined the attributes of God with the precision of a dogmatic theologian. But when he passes to

the actual figure of the Divine, he becomes as reverential as Isaiah. He can but describe Him as of the appearance of man—for in presence and spirit alike the royal form of humanity best expresses the likeness of God—only surrounded with a radiance of superhuman glory. This impression of Divine glory remains as the characteristic mark of Ezekiel's prophecy. Isaiah had already conceived of God's glory as the manifestation of His holiness—that by which He shed the light of His holiness through all the earth (Isa. vi. 3). With Ezekiel it is virtually the equivalent of holiness in action, holiness as it flashes out against evil, but in so doing purifies and saves.

A vision of Divine purity and holiness such as Ezekiel experienced must needs react with overwhelming force on his own weak and sinful nature. When he saw it, he fell upon his face, unable even to utter the words, 'Woe is me! for I am undone.' And after speech returned, he could refer to himself only as 'son of man,' a title suggestive of 'the infinite contrast between the heavenly and the earthly, between the glorious Being who speaks from the throne and the frail creature who needs to be supernaturally strengthened before he stands upright in the attitude of service.' [1]

The experience does not end, however, in the prostration of the finite before the Infinite. The

[1] Skinner, *The Book of Ezekiel*, p. 44.

wonder of religion is that the very being who feels himself so mean and helpless in God's sight can be raised above himself, and made to stand with boldness before the Throne. 'And He said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee. And a spirit entered into me, and set me on my feet, and I heard Him speak unto me' (ii. 1f.). No words could more happily combine the ideas of man's lowliness and dignity, his utter insignificance in presence of the Eternal and his personal majesty as the son of God. With this new sense of personal worth came the call to service. 'And He said unto me, Son of man, I am sending thee to the household of Israel, that rebellious nation, which hath rebelled against me, they and their fathers, even unto this day. . . . And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they hear or forbear to hear; for they are a rebellious house' (*vv.* 3ff.). Thereupon a roll was put into his hand, 'written within and without,' full of 'lamentations and mourning and woe,' and he was bidden eat it. So he opened his mouth, and ate the roll, and it was in his mouth 'as honey for sweetness' (*vv.* 9ff.).

Under this weird imagery the heavy burden of his earlier ministry is borne home to him. Like Jeremiah, he must be a herald of doom to his people. Standing as a watchman on the battlements of the city, he searches the gathering gloom

for portents of disaster. The sight of the horrors encompassing Jerusalem paralyzes him, and he sinks down speechless with fear. At other times he leaps forth to meet the coming danger, playing around it with a wild and lurid imagination. Then a strange sweetness steels into his tones—the gracious utterance of a spirit which has found rest in God. Bitter as the message may be, Jahweh has put it in his mouth; and His words become to him a joy and the rejoicing of his heart.

CHAPTER XVII

Ezekiel and the Fall of Jerusalem

It was with a heart on fire that Ezekiel returned to Tel-Abib. In his agitation he sat for seven days stupefied among his people, unable to express himself by word or deed (iii. 15). When he had recovered from the shock of the vision, it still seemed as if invisible bands were laid on him, and he remained dumb, his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth (iii. 25f.).[1] Betaking himself therefore to the language of sign and symbol, he fetched a soft clay tablet, on which he drew the plan of a city surrounded by siege-works, and with an iron griddle pressed forward the attack, as an omen of the inexorable force of Divine judgment on the sinful people (iv. 1–3). Then making him cakes of wheat and barley, beans and lentils, he portioned them out by scale, twenty shekels (eight or nine ounces) per day, with water also carefully measured, the sixth part of an hin (rather less than a quart)

[1] Read 1st pers. sing., *I will lay bands upon thee, and will bind thee with them.* While there is no conclusive proof of Klostermann's theory of catalepsis, Ezekiel was clearly a pathological subject, liable to trance and *alalia* (temporary dumbness).

per day, as a sign that Jerusalem would shortly be reduced to the scantiest siege-rations (*vv.* 9a, 10f.). With a sharp sword he next shore off the hair of his head and beard, dividing it into three equal portions, one to be burnt with fire, a second to be slashed by the sword around the city walls, and the third to be scattered to the winds, in token of the fate reserved for the citizens of Jerusalem by fire and sword and flight (v. 1f.).[1] The opening of the prophet's lips meant but the translation of these signs into speech. Jahweh had planted Jerusalem in the midst of the nations, and revealed unto her His judgments and statutes; but she had wrought more wickedness than any of the nations, and must drain the cup of His wrath, until she learned that He was Jahweh (*vv.* 5ff.). The land reeked with idolatry, therefore a full end was come on its inhabitants. The sword of Jahweh would descend also on its cities and high places, making it desolate as the desert from one corner to the other, even from the Negeb of Judah to Riblah (vi. 1ff.).

A year passed in awful anticipation of evil; but

[1] There is no reason to question the reality of these symbolical actions, with A. B. Davidson and some other scholars. If they are more bizarre than the deeds of prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah, it must be remembered that Ezekiel was a more ecstatic character than either. The only action that awakens genuine suspicion is the lying on one side for 190 (LXX) and the other for 40 days; but the symbols of exile both here and in *vv.* 9*b*, 12–15 are probably an expansion of the original.

good news came from Jerusalem, and the elders of Tel-Abib approached Ezekiel for some message of hope. A fervent patriot, he would gladly have answered them according to their wishes: but the thought of Jerusalem's sin flung him once more into a trance, and the whole tragedy was unrolled before him. Looking Northward from the inner gate of the Temple court, his eyes fell on 'the image of jealousy'—the Asherah that Josiah had removed—once more restored to its place. Through a hole in the wall he next saw seventy elders of Jerusalem in a secret chamber of the Temple engaged in mystery rites, burning incense to 'every form of creeping things and abominable beasts,' the images of which stood 'portrayed on the wall round about.' At the outer gateway he found the women lamenting for Tammuz, the sensuous Spring-god of the East. Between the porch and the altar some twenty rulers of Israel likewise paid homage to the sun, polluting heaven with the foul odour of their sacrifices (viii. 1ff.).[1] This crowning dishonour Jahweh could not overlook. In his vision the prophet hears Him command the seven angels that have charge over Jerusalem to draw near with their destroying weapons in their hands. One clothed

[1] Under the influence of a clairvoyant trance—partly no doubt the precipitate of what he had formerly seen and heard—Ezekiel here describes actual conditions in Jerusalem. The chapter is thus of supreme historical importance.

in linen and equipped with a writer's inkhorn by his side—the angel of Jahweh—goes through the city, placing the *taw*—the mark of Jahweh—upon the foreheads of all who sigh and mourn for the abominations done in the Holy Place. The other six follow in his footsteps, slaying without mercy such as have not the sign imprinted on them, 'both old men and young, women and maidens and children.' Fire from the altar within Jahweh's chariot is strewn over Jerusalem, and city and Temple perish in the flames; then with the same stately majesty which Ezekiel had seen by the banks of the Chebar, the Glory of Jahweh remounts His chariot, and passes slowly from the sanctuary, to return no more until it has been cleansed from its impurity (ix. 1ff.).[1]

The fate portended in this sublime vision drew on apace, and the prophet's movements assumed a correspondingly ominous cast. One day he would gather together his travelling gear in full view of the people, and in the twilight dug through the wall of his house and escaped in the darkness —a presage of the coming flight from Jerusalem, unless they considered their ways, and returned unto Jahweh (xii. 1ff.). At other times he ate his bread with quaking, and drank with trembling

[1] The natural sequence of the prophecy is interrupted by a fresh description of Jahweh's chariot (x. 1, 4, 8–17) and a belated account of further idolatries in the Temple, followed by a promise of Restoration (xii. 1–12).

anxiety, as a sign that they also would eat and drink in terror of their lives (*vv.* 17–20). Such unwonted happenings must have left on the minds of the people a strange impression of wonder and awe, but they comforted themselves with the thought that the days lengthened out, and every vision failed (xii. 22). For the prophet there was no comfort here. In spite of seeming delay, thus saith Jahweh, 'The days are at hand, and every vision hasteneth to fulfilment,' while vain dreams and 'flattering divinations' shall no more be found in Israel (*vv.* 23f.). As for the prophets who prophesy lies to their people—daubing the broken walls with plaster to conceal the damage, and themselves burrowing like jackals in the holes, instead of bravely manning the breaches (xiii. 1ff.)—and the prophetesses who hunt the souls of men by their foolish and deadly enchantments (*vv.* 17ff.)—on their heads will be laid the guilt of their sins, and prophets and people will perish in a common overthrow (xiv. 6ff). All hope of rescuing Jerusalem is gone. Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, were found in the city, they should save neither son nor daughter—only the righteous would escape (*vv.* 12ff.). Israel is now but the dried-up stem of a wild vine, fit only to be cast into the fire and burned (xv. 1ff.). In a still more unsavoury figure she is likened to the degraded daughter of an Amorite father and a

Hittite mother, who has rewarded Jahweh's constant and loving care by the most unblushing whoredom (ch. xvi.); she and her elder sister Samaria are a pair of shameless harlots, vying with each other in sin (ch. xxiii.). Both king and people have played the traitor against Jahweh in breaking their oath to Nebuchadrezzar and turning to Egypt for help, and the fate of the traitor will be theirs. The Babylonian eagle will come and pluck up the false vine by the roots, and cut off its fruit and fresh spring leaves, that it may wither and die (xvii. 1–10).

Though naturally a man of grave moral temper, who holds in severe restraint the promptings of the heart, Ezekiel pays a generous tribute of respect to the brave young lions of Judah, trapped and caged by the wiles of the enemy.

The mother was a lioness
In the midst of lions; [1]
She couched among the young lions,
She reared her whelps.

She brought up one of her whelps,
A young lion he grew;
He learned to catch the prey,
Mankind he devoured.

The nations raised clamour against him,
In their pit was he taken;

[1] The mother is doubtless Judah, not Hamutal, the wife of Josiah, as Kraetzschmar supposes.

They brought him with hooks in his jaw
To the land of Egypt.[1]

When she saw that she was befooled,
That her hope was gone,
She took one more of her whelps,
A young lion she made him.

He stalked among the lions,
A young lion he grew;
He learned to catch the prey,
Mankind he devoured.

He rioted through their palaces,[2]
Their cities he laid waste;
The land and its fulness were awed
At the noise of his roaring.

Against him the nations placed
Their traps all around;
Against him they spread their net,
In their pit was he taken.

With hooks they brought him to Babel,
In a cage they placed him,[3]
That his voice should be heard no more
On the mountains of Israel (xix. 2–9).

In another fine elegy he portrays the impending destruction of the mother herself, through the folly of her last degenerate scion.

Thy mother was like a vine
Planted by waters;

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[1] The reference here is clearly to Jehoahaz (cf. 2 Kings xxiii. 31ff.). The second lion is thus most naturally identified with Jehoiachin, though Kraetzschmar applies both elegies to the coming fate of Zedekiah.

[2] Read וַיִּנָּעַר בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֵיהֶם, which yields a good parallel to the following *stichos*.

[3] I have transposed the two clauses, and omitted the final phrase as an explanatory gloss (cf. C. H. Toy).

Full-branching she was, and fruitful,
Through the waters many.

A strong branch she had—
A sceptre of rulers;
High was its growth 'mid the foliage,
And stately with many a shoot.[1]

She was plucked up in fury,
She was thrown to the ground;
The East wind parched her fruit,
Tore off her shoots.

Her strong branch withered away,
The fire devoured it;
And now she is planted in desert ground,
In a parched land.

And fire hath gone out from her branch,[2]
And consumed her shoots;
And her strong branch abideth no more
As a sceptre for rule (xix. 10–14).

As the fatal day approaches, the prophet's words take on a keener edge. Already he sees the sword of Jahweh unsheathed, sharpened and furbished for slaughter, its point turned against all the gateways of Israel (xxi. 8ff.). Soon the sword assumes human form in Nebuchadrezzar, halting for a moment at the fork of the roads which lead to Jerusalem and Ammon, hurriedly consulting the

[1] The 'strong branch' is the Davidic house, with its 'sceptre for rule,' the 'shoots' being the individual kings, the last of which is Zedekiah.

[2] The fire which went from the 'branch,' and consumed the tree and its shoots, refers doubtless to the foolish revolt of Zedekiah, which brought nation and monarchy to a common end.

omens, and then striking the high road for Jerusalem, with ' overthrow, overthrow, overthrow ' for city and prince and people (xxi. 18ff.). The house of Israel is as ' the dross of silver ' to be melted in the furnace (xxii. 17ff.), while Jerusalem is like a rusty caldron, filled with blood and all manner of impurities, which must be placed on the fire, and burned red hot, until the rust is removed, and the filthiness consumed into nothingness (xxiv. 6ff.). The nations that abet Jerusalem in her evil courses share her fate. Though the omens meanwhile point away from Ammon, the sword is furbished against her too, with an edge that glitters as lightning, to strike the vitals of the people, until their very remembrance is gone (xxi. 28ff.). The great crocodile Egypt, which wallowed in the Nile-streams and said, ' This river is mine own : 'twas I that made it,' shall be drawn up with hooks in his jaws, and be flung on the open fields as meat for the beasts of the earth and the fowls of heaven ; his land also shall be ravaged by the sword, and laid waste ' from Migdol (the Northern limit of Egypt) to Syene (Assouan), even as far as the border of Ethiopia,' so that no foot either of man or beast shall pass through it for the space of forty years (xxix. 1ff.). It is vain for Israel to rely on the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt ; for Jahweh shall break his arm, and cause the sword to fall from his hand, and place it in the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, who shall

scatter Egypt among the nations, that they may know that He is Jahweh (xxx. 20ff.). In a series of visions which rival Dante in stupendous imagination, the prophet sees Pharaoh and all his hosts smitten like a cedar of Lebanon, that once surpassed all the trees of Eden in glory and greatness, but is now made lowly as those in the nether parts of the earth (xxxi. 1ff.), or trapped and flung to the sword like a young lion that spread terror among the nations (xxxii. 1ff.), finding a dishonoured bed with Assyria and Elam, Meshech and Tubal, Edom and the Sidonians, even all the uncircumcized who lorded it over mankind in the land of the living, and have now carried their shame to their eternal dwellings in the inmost recesses of Sheol (xxxii. 17ff.). But his most splendid elegies are reserved for the proud commercial city of Tyre, stately and rich as one of her own galleons, with her king adorned with beauty and wisdom as a cherub in the garden of Eden, walking among the sons of God on the holy mountains.[1]

[1] The short book of Oracles against the nations is introduced as a kind of dramatic intermezzo to cover the shifting of the scenes. The Oracles themselves belong to different dates. Those against Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia (ch. xxv.) clearly presuppose the fall of Jerusalem; the Tyrian prophecies (xxvi. 1–xxviii. 19) immediately predate the siege under Nebuchadrezzar (*c.* 585–572 B.C.), while those against Egypt (xxix. 1–xxxii. 32) cover a period of some two years before and after the tragedy of 586 (except the appendix xxix. 17–21, dated April 570).

Thou hast said, 'A good ship am I,
Perfect in beauty!'
In the heart of the seas they fashioned thee,
Made perfect thy beauty.

With cypresses from Senir
They built all thy planking;
Cedars they took from Lebanon
To fashion thy mast.

Of the loftiest oaks of Bashan
They made thy rudder;
Thy deck they built of box-wood
From the isles of Kittim.

Thy sail was of linen from Egypt,
Finely embroidered;
Thine awning was violet and purple,
From the isles of Elishah.

The princes of Zidon and Arvad
Were rowers for thee;
The sages of Zemer were in thee—
They were thy steersmen.

The elders and sages of Gebal
Repaired thy leakage;[1]

* * *

* * *

The ships of Tarshish drew thither
With wares for thee;
So wert thou filled and made great
In the heart of the seas.

Out on the mighty waters
Thy rowers brought thee;
The East wind dashed thee in pieces
In the heart of the seas.[2]

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[1] The long list of traffickers with Tyre (*vv.* 9*b*–24) is universally recognized as a prosaic intrusion, valuable as an historical *résumé*, but quite alien to the prophetic genius of the piece.

[2] I have also omitted *v.* 27 as a prosaic expansion of the picture.

At the sound of thy steersmen's cry
The coastlands tremble;
And down from their ships pass all
Who handle the oar.

All seamen who ply the deep
Mount up to the land,
Over thee raise their voice:
And bitterly cry.

Dust they pour on their heads,
And wallow in ashes;
For thee do they make themselves bald,
And gird them with sackcloth.

Over thee raise they a dirge,
And thus lament thee:
'Who was so proud as Tyre
In the heart of the sea?

'While thy merchandise came from the deep,
Thou filledst the peoples;
With Thy plenty of goods and wares
Thou enrichedst kings.

'Now art thou dashed in the sea,
In the depth of the waters;
Thy wares and all thy muster
Are sunk in the midst of thee.

'The men of the isles are abashed,
They are dismayed for thee;
Their kings are stricken with horror,
Their faces grow livid.

'The merchantmen clap their hands,
They hiss thee to scorn;
For awful destruction is thine,
Thou art nought for ever' (xxvii. 3–36).

Perfect in wisdom wert thou,[1]
Complete in beauty;

[1] The text here is somewhat expanded. I have chosen the significant elements, altering the reading slightly.

Thou dwelledst in Eden, the garden of God—
All precious stones thy vestment.[1]

Thy home was with the cherubim,
In their midst I placed thee;
On the mountain of God thou wert,
Thou didst walk 'mid stones of fire.

Guiltless thou wert in thy ways
From the day thou wert made,
Until evil was found in thee,
Through the store of thy merchandise.

Thou didst fill thy heart with violence,
Thou wert stained with sin;
So I cast thee out from the mountain of God,
From the stones of fire I removed thee.[2]

Through thy beauty thy heart was uplifted,
Through thy splendour thy wisdom was marred;
So I flung thee to earth before kings,
I made thee a gazing-stock.

Through the guilt of thy merchandise thou profanedst thy sanctity,
So I sent out fire from thy midst which devoured thee;
And I laid thee in ashes upon the ground,
In the eyes of all that behold thee.

All that know thee among the peoples
Are astonished at thee;
For awful destruction is thine,
Thou art nought for ever (xxviii. 12–19).

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[1] The catalogue of precious stones is doubtless a later intrusion.

[2] The text of these verses is corrupt and highly uncertain. The translation is based partly on Kittel's readings, partly on general conjecture.

CHAPTER XVIII

Ezekiel the Prophet of Regeneration

THE last prophecy against Jerusalem had been delivered on the day when Nebuchadrezzar drew his lines around the doomed city (Jan. 587). The day was a mournful one for the prophet as well, for that evening the wife who was 'the delight of his eyes' died and left him in a stupor of grief and despair, a living symbol of the numb agony with which his fellow-exiles should lament the passing of the city that was their joy and pride, 'the delight of their eyes,' and the centre of their heart's affection (xxiv. 15ff.). The closing scenes were enacted under an ominous silence. At last on the fifth day of the tenth month of the eleventh year of the captivity (Jan. 585) a fugitive from Jerusalem arrived with the news that the city was smitten. The people heard the news with chill horror. All through these months of anxious waiting they had hoped against hope, their hearts often trembling for the Temple of their God, yet hardly able to entertain the thought that He would abandon His dwelling-place. Now all they rested their trust on

had gone for ever, and there seemed no more good that life could bring them. A moral paralysis added to their despair. In the old days of buoyant hope they had listened with an easy conscience to the prophet's denunciation of their sins; but now the thought of their evil past lay as a heavy weight upon their hearts, a weight which they could not throw off. 'Truly our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we pine away in them; how then can we live?' (xxxiii. 10). Even if they could pay the forfeit of their own sins, they had still to meet the accumulated guilt of their fathers' sins; and from this fatal entail they could not shake themselves free. In the proverbial expression which was so constantly on their lips, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge' (xviii. 2). Nothing seemed to await them, therefore, but a future of unrelieved misery and mortification, with death to end the tragedy, the sooner for them the better.

When repentance was found an empty dream, and the fate of Jerusalem thus became inevitable, Ezekiel's lips had been sealed. But with the ruin of the old building he shook off the bonds that fettered him, and amid whatsoever disappointment and failure toiled unweariedly for the New Jerusalem that was to be. The evening before the messenger arrived, he had lain in a trance, unable to speak or think; but that very moment his mouth was opened,

and he was ' no more dumb ' (xxxiii. 22). In season and out of season—like a watchman entrusted with the lives of his people (iii. 16ff. ; xxxiii. 1ff.)—he pressed home on their conscience the good tidings of love and forgiveness. ' As I live, saith Jahweh, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; I desire only that the wicked should turn from his way and live. Therefore turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why would ye die, O house of Israel ? ' (xxxiii. 11). Let them not complain that His ways were unequal ! In the years of their backsliding He had judged them by the straight rule of righteousness ; now He was willing to save them to the uttermost. The righteousness of the righteous man who fell into evil ways would not deliver him in the day of his transgression ; nor would the wickedness of the wicked man be reckoned against him for evil—still less would the guilt of their fathers' sin be charged to their account. The entail was broken once for all, and the issues of life and death lay in each man's present attitude to God and His salvation (*vv.* 12ff.)

In the emphasis he lays on redemption Ezekiel takes a foremost place in the line of evangelical preachers. His cardinal doctrine is the sovereign grace of the God who freely forgives iniquity, and from whom all human goodness flows. Not for Israel's sake does He pardon their transgressions, but for His ' holy name ' (xxxvi. 22)—because sal-

vation is consonant with His character. They have profaned His name among the heathen, but He will not leave them in their shame. 'I will sprinkle clean water over you, that ye may be clean; even from all your uncleanness and idolatries will I cleanse you. I will give you also a new heart, and a new spirit will I place within you; I will remove the stony heart from within you, and give you an heart of flesh. And my spirit will I place within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and to keep my judgments and do them.' Then will the remembrance of past evil no longer paralyze their moral natures, but be a fresh incentive to obedience. 'Ye shall remember your evil ways and your doings that were not good, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations,' cleaving unto Him who alone can help and save men from sin (*vv.* 25ff.).

Ezekiel's mind may still move in the moral world of the Deuteronomists. In his catalogue of virtues the stress is laid on ritual purity (xviii. 6). But he has a true feeling for justice and humanity as the fruits of righteousness before God. He that would live must not merely refrain from idolatry and uncleanness, but must withdraw his hand from all iniquity, and 'execute judgment between man and man,' and likewise 'give his bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with a garment' (*vv.* 7ff.). His own words are touched by a new

tenderness, akin to the grace that flowed from the Master's lips. They strike on the ear like the love songs of a minstrel with a pleasant voice, to which men listen with delight (xxxiii. 30ff.). Thus insensibly his ministry changes from that of the watchman, sitting alone on his watch-tower, to that of the shepherd or pastor, feeding the sheep of Jahweh. In the portraiture of the Good Shepherd (ch. xxxiv.) he unconsciously reveals the ideal of his own ministry. Unlike the false shepherds who had no real love for the flock, but exploited them for their own ends, feeding themselves from the flock's pasturage and using their wool for personal comfort, showing no tenderness towards the sick and wounded, the lambs and the strayed ones, but leaving them to roam in the wilderness, the prey of robbers and wild beasts, he constantly sought after that which was lost, to bring it back to the rich green pastures of grace, bound up that which was bruised, and strengthened that which was weak, prepared to sacrifice his own life, if duty called him, to save the sheep from harm (*vv.* 10ff.).

All this represents a new stage in the history of religion. Earlier prophets had dealt with the nation as a whole. With the breaking of the old national forms, Ezekiel set himself to a reconstruction of religious life on an individual basis. In so doing he carried to a logical conclusion Jeremiah's prin-

ciple of personal religion. It is unjust, however, to charge him with an ' atomistic ' view of spiritual life.[1] If religion rested essentially on faith, this was for him no narrow, self-centred way of salvation, but the bond of a richer fellowship of grace. In the wonderful vision of the valley, the dry bones came together at the word of prophecy, and were clothed with flesh and skin and sinew, and through the quickening touch of the breath of Jahweh ' they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army ' (xxxvii. 1ff.).

Though religion was thus released from national moulds, Ezekiel had no thought of his people continuing in exile. The shame and suffering of captivity were but a passing phase, and Israel's destiny was yet to be worked out on its own soil. To Ezekiel the land of Palestine was the sacred ground on which Jahweh had placed His name, and there also would His glory be made manifest to the world. That land was now defiled by heathen feet and the people's own abominable deeds. But Jahweh was even now cleansing it. The fires that had swallowed up Jerusalem, and seemed to the exiles to cut off all their hope, were really the agency by which He was to purify the Holy Place, and make it the shrine of His glory. Then should the land that now lay desolate become like the garden of Eden, and the cities that were waste and ruined be fenced and

[1] Bertholet, *Hesekiel*, p. 21.

filled with happy multitudes (xxxvi. 4ff., 33ff.). The nations which held Israel under bondage and those that jeered at her downfall—Edom and Ammon and Moab and the Philistines—would be handed over for a spoil and made a perpetual desolation (ch. xxv. xxxv.). But Israel herself would be reunited—Judah linked with Ephraim into one loyal kingdom of the Holy One—and would be led back to the old home with songs of exultation, to serve the Lord with purity and singleness of heart. And over them He would place His Anointed —whom Ezekiel represents no longer as a Great King ruling in majesty, but as the Good Shepherd of the flock—to be their prince for ever, that they might dwell in eternal security—Jahweh Himself establishing a covenant of peace with them, overthrowing the barbaric hosts of Gog [1] and all other enemies before their faces, and causing the nations to acknowledge that He had sanctified His people, when they saw His Temple in their midst for evermore (xxxvii. 15ff., xxxviii. xxxix.).

Ezekiel's first tender memories were twined around the Temple, and there also his last thoughts lingered. For many years he had planned for the rebuilding of the Holy Place; and now in the opening days of 572 B.C. his plans take shape in the great

[1] In the last decisive conflict with Gog—doubtless an idealization of the Scythian invaders of Josiah's reign—we meet with a permanent element in Jewish Apocalypse (cf. pp. 314ff.).

vision of the New Jerusalem and its Temple. From his spiritual station on 'a very high mountain' in the land of Israel he sees rising before his eyes the semblance of a city and Temple laid out and measured by an angelic architect, tier added to tier in exact symmetrical proportions. The Temple itself is separated by a bounding wall from the city and all its 'common' activities, as well as from the Court and royal cemetery, so that the house of Israel shall no more defile God's holy name either by their profanities or by the dead bodies of their kings. Doorways and courts and chambers, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, are carefully planned and graded, the building and ornamentation being alike designed to enhance the sanctity of the whole. The altar of burnt offering is set in its place, and consecrated for worship; the faithful sons of Zadok are appointed God's priests for ever, the Levites who ministered at the high places being degraded to menial service at the altar; the orders and duties, clothing and perquisites of each are minutely defined; the yearly course of Sabbaths and feast-days is defined; and Prince and people have their several functions assigned to them (xl.–xlvi.).[1]

[1] The text of these chapters is in considerable disorder, owing not merely to corruptions, but also to dislocations and later additions. For details see the Commentaries, also J. Herrmann, *Ezechielstudien* (1908).

The New Jerusalem of Ezekiel's dreams is thus no more a secular capital, but a City of Holiness, dominated by the Temple and its worship. The whole design of the city—its gradations in sanctity, its walls of separation, and the symmetry of its parts—is symbolical of holiness. Even the secular life of the city is brought under the laws of holiness. The Prince shall rule in judgment, and ordain just weights and measures, but his main duty is to provide for the maintenance of the priests, and the due fulfilment of all the statutory sacrifices. A city thus purified and sanctified is once more the fitting abode of the Holy One. Thus in his vision Ezekiel beholds the Glory of God return in splendour, to find in the Temple 'the place of His throne,' and to dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever (xliii. 1ff.).

From under the doorway of the newly hallowed Temple the prophet sees a stream flow Eastward to the Arabah, its current deepening pace by pace, the waters pure and limpid, swarming with fish, and charged with sweetness and healing, even for the brackish waters of the Dead Sea—its banks also clothed on either side with all manner of trees 'whose leaf doth not wither, and whose fruit doth not fail,' but which yields every month fruit for food and leaf for healing, 'because the waters thereof issue from the sanctuary' (xlvii. 1ff.).[1]

[1] The idyllic picture of the stream flowing from the Temple

The land thus blessed and sanctified by the presence of Jahweh is likewise laid out in rectangular lines, the portion of the priests and Levites round the Holy Place, and the lots of the twelve tribes near or distant, according to their purity of birth. The city itself is a perfect square, four thousand reeds by measure on every side, with three gates on each front, one for each of the tribes of Israel. And the name of the city is *Jahweh shammah*, 'the Lord is there' (xlviii. 35).

Ezekiel's ideal, then, is a holy people in a holy city, worshipping their God in the beauty of holiness. And he not merely upheld this ideal before his people, but stamped it on their heart and imagination, moulding them into a nation of priests, set apart from all others by the stringency of their sacerdotal and ritual forms. Ezekiel is the real father of Judaism, though it needed the administrative genius of Ezra and Nehemiah to carry through the principles he had sketched for them. In many ways this movement represents a decline from the high spiritual altitude of prophecy. Religion was externalized, and cultus once more won the ascendency over faith and love. The fungus growth of Pharisaism was the direct outcome of such legalism.

gate is an idealization of the gentle waters of Shiloah which likewise fascinated the imagination of Isaiah. It assumes a prominent place in later apocalyptic visions (cf. Joel iii. 18; Zech. xiv. 8; Rev. xxii. 1ff.).

Yet the stern, fast laws by which the people were now bound helped to preserve the living essence of religion through all the crises that confronted them. Under the crust of ritualism the healing waters continued to bless and fructify the land. The Law itself proved a paedagogue to lead men to Christ. Holding them under restraint till the years of maturity were come, it prepared them for the wise use of freedom, not as the occasion of selfishness and licence, but as the inspiration to deeds of 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance,' against which there is no law (Gal. v. 22f.).

CHAPTER XIX

Habakkuk the Prophet of Faith

THOUGH the word spoken by Ezekiel fell too often on hard soil, it found a lodgment in the hearts of sensitive hearers, and soon began to bear fruit. The latter years of the Exile saw a new quickening of interest in the story of Jahweh's past dealings with His people, a keener regard for His honour, and a sincere repentance for sin. Faithful souls drew together in little communities, bound by the Law of Holiness (Lev. xvii.–xxvi.), seeking to serve God in spirit and truth, keeping His Sabbaths, and quietly awaiting His time for deliverance. While some thus found salvation through patience, others were goaded almost to despair by the continued triumph of oppression. Israel had sinned and paid the price of her sins, but the crueller sins of her persecutors remained unpunished. How long could the Holy One remain silent while the heathen defiled His heritage and trampled righteousness underfoot? Let justice be done impartially! As He had visited His people with the fruits of their iniquity, let Him put forth His hand, and exact of their enemies also full requital for their deeds! To them let the cup

pass round, till they are drunk with the wine of His anger! (Pss. lxxxiii. 13ff.; cxxxvii. 7ff.; Lam. i. 21f.; iii. 64ff., etc.).

This protest of an outraged conscience finds classical expression in the book of Habakkuk, a masterpiece of vehement and impetuous rhetoric, where prophecy passes into eager question and challenge.[1]

In a dramatic exordium the fierce power of the Chaldeans is hailed as the instrument of Jahweh's

[1] The lack of harmony between Hab. i. 5–11 and its immediate sequel has been noted by all recent scholars. Various attempts have been made to force the discordant elements into unity: *e.g.*, the denial of the predictive character of *vv.* 5–11 (Davidson, Stonehouse); the placing of these verses after ii. 4, the oppressors being then identified with the Assyrians (Budde) or the Egyptians (G. A. Smith); and the alteration of Kasdim to Kittim, the Cyprians or Greeks, the prophecy being thus read as a protest against the campaigns of Alexander the Great (Duhm). Accepting the text as it stands, Giesebrecht, Wellhausen, Peake and other scholars regard i. 5–11 as a fragment from an older prophecy woven into the texture of Habakkuk, while Marti resolves the book into four separate congeries of texts. The present writer accepts the theory of an older prophecy; he is inclined, however, to extend this prophecy to cover the whole of i. 2–11, as well as the original nucleus of the Woes in ch. ii., and to find in its author a like-minded contemporary of Jeremiah (*c.* 608 B.C.). The genuine prophecy of Habakkuk is then most naturally assigned to the middle of the Exile (560–550), an assumption borne out to a certain extent by the Hebrew tradition which associates Habakkuk with Daniel (*Bel and the Dragon*, *vv.* 33ff), as well as the Babylonian complexion of the name, which has been identified as that of a garden plant. The Prayer of Hababbuk (ch. iii.) is an independent eschatological Psalm, excerpted from some late Jewish collection, with musical notes (cf. p. 249).

wrath against his lawless and rebellious people. But under their rule far more grievous wrongs darken the earth. Not content with executing judgment for Israel's sin, the Chaldeans in sheer lust of blood swallow up the righteous, and slaughter nations unpitying, as a fisherman slays the helpless booty of his nets. Thus the prophet raises his bitter complaint to heaven.

Art not Thou from of old,
Jahweh my Holy God, that diest not!
Was it Thou that didst set him for judgment,
And ordained him a minister[1] *of chastisement?*

Thou that art too pure of eyes to look on evil,
Who canst not behold iniquity—
Why dost Thou look on the work of wrong-doers,
Why be silent when the wicked man swalloweth the righteous?

He maketh men like the fish of the sea,
Like the swarms that have no ruler;
All of them into his net he draweth,
And sweepeth them into his seine.

Thus to his net doth he sacrifice,
To his seine he burneth incense,
For through them his portion is fat,
And his food is plentiful (i. 12–16).

Are these outrages on humanity to go on unchecked?

Shall he empty his net[2] *for ever,*
To slaughter nations unpitying? (*v.* 17).

The prophet refuses to accept the Divine silence

[1] For the pointless צוּר, *Rock*, read צִיר, *messenger* or *minister* (Duhm).

[2] It is possible, however, that we should read יָרִיק חַרְבּוֹ, *unbare his sword* (cf. Exod. xv. 9; Lev. xxvi. 33, etc.).

as final. With equal patience and daring he takes his stand on the high planes of vision, and awaits the revelation of God's purpose.

On my watch-tower will I stand,
And will set me on my rampart;
I will look out to see what He will speak with me,
What answer He will make to my complaint (ii. 1).

Anon the answer comes; and he is bidden write it on tablets, with clear bold letters, that one may read it running.

Though the vision may wait for the time appointed,
It straineth toward the end, and will fail not;
If it linger, yet do thou wait for it,
Since it will surely come, and not delay:
Behold! the soul of the wicked shall faint in him,
But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness.[1] (*vv.* 3f.).

In this great sentence, which has become the watchword of Christian freedom, the eternal contrasts are defined. However prosperous he may now appear, the wicked man has the seeds of death already planted in his soul, and the issue is inevitable. He that sinneth shall die. On the other hand, the soul of the righteous is hid with God. Whatever trials or dangers beset him, loyalty to God and righteousness will save him from them all. Even now he 'lives' through his faith: all that makes life worth living he enjoys in full measure —the sense of Jahweh's presence and favour, the

[1] On the reading cf. Kittel's note.

bliss of a good conscience, strength to overcome evil, the hope of abiding security in life and death.[1]

With Habakkuk, however, faith is not quietism. If he cannot yet see the end of oppression, he launches against it the bolts of Divine judgment. In the satires of ch. ii. a healthy human heart records its instinctive condemnation of cruelty and inhumanity—protests against the diabolical doctrine that Might is Right. Here Habakkuk shows himself the spiritual associate and successor of Nahum, the prophet of humanity.[2]

Woe! proud and treacherous wight,
Vain, and never satisfied,
Who enlargeth his desire like Sheol,
And like Death is never satisfied!
He doth gather to him all nations,
And heapeth to him all peoples,
But shall not these all raise a taunt-song against him,
A satire and riddles upon him?

Woe! he that amasseth what is not his,
And runneth up debts on pledge!
Shall not they suddenly rise that shall sting thee,[3]
And awake to torment thee.

* * * *

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[1] On the rich connotation of the terms אֱמוּנָה, *faithfulness*, and חָיָה, *live*, cf. Driver's luminous exposition in his *Minor Prophets* (*Century Bible*) pp. 62ff.

[2] The Woes against the Chaldeans are probably based on an older prophecy against avarice, cruelty, and drunkenness in general (cf. p. 244, n. 1).

[3] The word נֹשְׁכִים means both *biters* and *debtors*, or *payers of interest* (biters from the capital sum).

And thou shalt be their prey.[1]
For as thou hast spoiled many nations,
All the rest of the peoples shall spoil thee.

Woe! he that getteth false gain,
And storeth up wrong for his house—
To set his nest on high,
And be safe from the hand of evil!
For thy house thou hast planned but shame,
And guilt hast brought on thy soul;
For the stone shall cry from the wall,
And the beam from the rafter shall answer it.

Woe! he that buildeth a city with blood,
And foundeth a town on crime!
Do not the peoples toil for the fire,
And the nations labour for nought?[2]
For the wrong done to Lebanon shall o'erwhelm thee,
And the havoc of cattle affright thee,
And the bloodshed of man, and wrong on the land,
The city, and all that dwell therein.

Woe! he that giveth his neighbour drink
From the cup of his wrath until he be drunken,
That he may gloat on his nakedness,
And see him sated with shame!
Drink thyself from thy goblet,
And stagger, and show thy foreskin!
For the beaker from Jahweh's right hand shall pass round to thee,
And shame shall come on thy glory[3] (ii. 5–16).

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[1] The half line here is lost. On the other hand, *v.* 8*b* is prematurely inserted from *v.* 17. Its proper place would seem to be after *vv.* 12f.

[2] *V.* 14 is a citation from Isaiah xi. 9, introduced by the formula, 'Behold, this is from Jahweh of hosts,' but quite alien to this context. On other alterations cf. Kittel's notes.

[3] The oracle on idolatry (*vv.* 19f.). with its prosaic counterpart (*v.* 18), is doubtless an appendix to the original cycle of Woes.

The accompanying Psalm of Habakkuk bears all the marks of a later Jewish Apocalypse; but it forms a fine dramatic close to the book. As if in response to the prophet's plea for justice, Jahweh sweeps in battle-array from the heights of Sinai to bring deliverance to His people. So terrible is the splendour of His power that the poet himself trembles at the sight, and is filled with sorrowful compassion even for those who came to assail him and his people.

O Lord, I have heard the report of Thee,
O Lord, I have seen Thy doings:
In the midst of the years Thou dost make Thyself known,
In wrath Thou rememberest mercy.

Eloah cometh[1] *from Teman,*
The Holy One from Mount Paran;
His glory doth cover the heavens,
And the earth is filled with His praise.

Like fire is the brightness beneath Him,
At His side are beams (of light);
Before Him marcheth the Pestilence,
Behind Him stalketh the Plague.

Where He standeth, the earth is shaken,
Where He looketh, the rocks do quake;[2]
The ancient mountains are shattered,
The eternal hills bend low.

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[1] The past tenses are most probably prophetic futures. I have rendered them by the pictorial present.

[2] I have followed LXX in reading the passive, and Duhm in his happy conjecture of צוּרִים, *rocks*, for גּוֹיִם, *nations*.

Afraid are the tents of Cushan,
The curtains of Midian tremble;
Thou treadest the sea with Thy horses,
Through the surge of many waters.[1]

Is Thine anger hot with the streams,
Is Thy wrath, Lord, against the sea,
That Thou ridest upon Thy war-steeds,
While Thy chariots (roll) in triumph?

Thou makest Thy bow clean bare,
Thou fillest Thy quiver with shafts;
Thou cleavest the earth into rivers,
The mountains behold Thee, and writhe.

The clouds pour down with waters,
The abyss sendeth forth his voice;
The sun forgetteth his rising,
The moon standeth still in her dwelling.[2]

Thine arrows go forth like a flash,
Thy glittering spear is as lightning;
In wrath dost Thou stride through the earth,
In fury Thou tramplest the nations.

Thou art gone to the help of Thy people,
To save Thine anointed;
Thou dost shatter the house of the wicked,
To the rock layest bare its foundation.

With Thy shafts Thou dost pierce his head,
While his princes are scattered like chaff:[3]
I hear and my belly trembleth,
At the sound my lips do quiver.

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[1] The isolated *v.* 15 is usually taken as a variant to *v.* 8; I have introduced it as the point of transition between *vv.* 7 and 8.

[2] The reading here is recovered partly from Psalm lxxvii. 17, and partly from Lucian's recension of LXX.

[3] On the text cf. Kittel's notes. The omitted clauses are evident glosses.

Mouldering doth enter my bones,
And my footsteps totter beneath me;
I sigh for the day of trouble
That doth come on the folk that assaileth me (iii. 2–16).

In this ecstasy of sympathetic dread the Apocalypse ends; but a poet of more tender feeling has added a sweet song of peace and confidence in the face of the sorest trial and loss.

Though the fig-tree bear no fruit,
And there be no yield on the vines;
Though the olive labour fail,
And the field bring forth no food;

Though the flock be cut off from the sheepfold,
And no cattle be found in the stalls;
Yet I will exult in Jahweh,
I will joy in the God of my salvation;

For Jahweh the Lord is my strength,
He is my Rock, and none else;[1]
He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,
And causeth me to walk on my heights (*vv.* 17–19).

[1] The dependence of *v.* 19 on Psalm xviii. 30ff. suggests that some such line should be added as the parallel to the foregoing.

CHAPTER XX

The Prophet of Comfort

WHILE the exiles thus waited with mingled hope and anxiety, a meteor shot through the political heavens. About 558 B.C. Cyrus son of Cambyses had succeeded to the princedom of Anshan, a petty Persian state on the Southern border of Elam. By his personal magnetism and prowess in arms he rapidly subdued the neighbouring tribes, until in 549 he overwhelmed Astyages, son of Cyaxares, the powerful ruler of Media, and assumed the lordship of the united Medo-Persian Empire. Turning his sword next against Croesus of Lydia, he fought a drawn battle at Pteria, some fifty miles East of the Halys, and without waiting to recuperate his strength followed up Croesus' retreat to Sardis 'with such speed that he was himself the first to announce his coming to Crœsus.'[1] In fourteen days the citadel of Sardis was stormed, and the whole coast-land of Asia Minor fell under his power (*c.* 546 B.C.). So amazing a record of success flung the ancient nations of the East into an agony of amazement and fear; but in the rumble of Cyrus' victorious wheels the great prophet of the Exile (Isa. xl.–lv.) heard the sound

[1] Herod. i. 79.

of Jahweh's chariots as He rode in triumphal procession to bring deliverance to His captives, and tuning his notes to the strain of angelic voices from above broke into sweet songs of comfort and redemption.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,
Your God doth say:
Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem,
And call unto her—
That her warfare is ended,
Her guilt absolved,
That she hath received of Jahweh's hand
The double for all her sins.

Hark! one calleth: 'In the wilderness clear ye the way of Jahweh,
Make straight in the desert an highway for our God!
Let every valley be upraised,
And every mountain and hill brought low,
And the steep ground become a plain,
And the rugged heights a valley!
And the glory of Jahweh shall be unveiled,
And all flesh shall see it together;
For the mouth of Jahweh hath spoken.'

Hark! one saith, 'Call!'
And I said, 'What shall I call?'
(And he said:) 'All flesh is grass,
And all the beauty thereof like the flower of the field.
The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,
When the breath of Jahweh doth blow thereon;
The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,
But the word of our God shall stand for ever.'

On a lofty mountain get you up,
Ye heralds of good tidings to Zion!
Lift up your voice with strength,
Ye heralds of good tidings to Jerusalem![1]

[1] The participle מְבַשֶּׂרֶת is collective feminine, of the herald band. I have consequently rendered it by the plural.

Lift it up, fear not —
Say unto the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!'

Behold! the Lord God cometh with strength,
His arm having won Him the kingdom;
Behold! His reward is with Him,
And His recompense before Him.
Like a shepherd He tendeth His flock,
With His arm doth He gather them;
The lambs in His bosom He beareth,
And leadeth those that give suck (xl. 1–11).

This gentle Shepherd of Israel is the Almighty One who fashioned all things—measuring the waters in the hollow of His hand, and laying out the heavens with a span, weighing the mountains by the steelyard, and the hills in scales—in whose sight the nations are like a drop hanging from the edge of a bucket, or as the fine dust in the scales. It is He who hath stretched out the heavens as a canopy, who created the stars, and leadeth them out each night as a host in martial array, and Himself sitteth enthroned on the vault of the earth, turning princes to nothing, and making their judges like chaos—scarcely have they been planted or sown, scarcely hath their stem taken root in the earth, when He bloweth upon them, and they wither away, and the tempest sweepeth them off like stubble (*vv.* 12–26).

Why sayest thou then, O Jacob,
And speakest, O Israel:
'My way is hid from Jahweh,
And my cause doth pass (unheeded) from my God?'
Hast thou not known,
Hast thou not heard?

An eternal God is Jahweh,
Who created the ends of the earth.
He fainteth not, neither is weary;
His insight is unsearchable.
He giveth power to the fainting,
And to him that hath no might He increaseth strength.
Though the young men faint and grow weary,
And the warriors utterly fail,
They that wait upon Jahweh shall renew their strength,
They shall put forth pinions as eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint (*vv.* 27–31).

In these gracious accents we catch a different note from the lordliness of Isaiah. He dazzles us alike by the lustre of his style, and the royal ease with which he moves among kings and princes as the prophet of the Holy One. Deutero-Isaiah plays upon our hearts. His whole prophecy is bathed in an atmosphere of emotion. A warm loving nature here speaks to us, one whose life is bound up in his people's, and who pours out with welling happiness the tidings of great joy that have come first to himself. The even flow of his prophecy is interrupted by reflections, meditations, soliloquies, outbursts of melody, and exchanges of personal confidence with God, more in the style of Hosea or Jeremiah than the artistically finished utterances of Isaiah. The imagery is equally charged with emotion. Isaiah revelled in the freedom and splendour of Nature; Deutero-Isaiah loves to dwell on her more tender and human side. Even when he soars to heaven, he cannot forget his human sympathies.

No prophet has a richer conception of God's infinite and eternal majesty; but His crowning work is redemption. The great God has compassion on His people, and through darkness and suffering is leading them in the paths of righteousness. Already the light is breaking from the East, and Israel will rejoice therein, and with her 'all ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.'[1]

[1] Though a definite logical progress is not to be looked for in Deutero-Isaiah, the prophecy may be regarded as a lyrical drama in three Acts, thus—Prelude (ch. xl.); Act I. Israel's destiny among the nations (xli. 1–xliv. 23); Act II. Cyrus as Jahweh's Anointed (xliv. 24–xlviii. 22); Act III. The Servant's sufferings and glory (xlix. 1–liii. 22); Postlude (chs. liv. lv.). The first two Acts clearly precede the conquest of Babylon. The remaining section seems almost to presuppose the conquest, and is thus dated by a number of scholars after 538; but this impression is probably due to the prophet's vivid anticipation of the coming salvation, in which case the whole prophecy will belong to the same general period (546–540 B.C.). To remove the Servant Songs as later interpolations (Duhm, Kosters, Laue, etc.) is 'to gouge the eyes out of the book' (Budde). If the Songs be originally independent of Deutero-Isaiah, they must belong to an older poet, on whose heart the burden of his people's sufferings has borne yet more heavily (cf. especially Whitehouse, *Isaiah*, ii. 18ff.). Even so they are the focal points of the prophecy, the burning centres from which light is shed on all its parts. Various regions (Egypt, Palestine, Phoenicia, Babylonia) have been associated with the authorship of Deutero-Isaiah. The evidence of local atmosphere and scenery, as well as familiarity with religious beliefs, ritual and mythology, points very strongly to Babylonia, where also the prophet found his audience (cf. Whitehouse, *op. cit.*, pp. 32ff.). On the theological ideas of the prophecy see A. B. Davidson's articles in the *Expositor*, 1883–84, pp. 81ff., etc. (condensed in *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 377 ff.).

Listen to me in silence, ye coastlands,
And let the peoples await my pleading;
Let them draw near, then let them speak,
Together let us approach for judgment!

Who hath raised one up from the East,
Whom victory meeteth at every step?
He giveth up nations before him,
And bringeth down kings (to the earth);
His sword doth make them as dust,
Like driven stubble his bow:
He pursueth them, and passeth on safely,
By a path he doth tread not with his feet.[1]
Who hath wrought and done this?
Even He that called the generations (of man) from the beginning—
I Jahweh, the first,
The same also with the last.[2]

But thou, Israel, my servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
The seed of Abraham my friend,
* * *
Whom I fetched from the ends of the earth,
And called from the corners thereof —
To whom I said, 'Thou art my servant,
I have chosen thee, and spurned thee not'—
Fear not, for I am with thee,
Be not dismayed, for I am thy God!
I will strengthen, yea, help thee,
I will uphold thee with my right hand of victory[3] (xli. 1–10).

Yea, fear not, worm Jacob,
Thou maggot, Israel!

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[1] The allusion here is doubtless to the speed with which Cyrus covered the ground in his victorious march (cf. p. 252).

[2] *Vv.* 6f. belong to the description of idol-making (xl. 19f.) and *v.* 5 is probably a connecting link.

[3] On Deutero-Isaiah's use of צְדָקָה, *righteousness*, cf. G. A. Smith's chapter on "The Righteousness of Israel, and the Righteousness of God" (*The Book of Isaiah*, ii. 214ff.), and Skinner's exhaustive note (*Isaiah*, ii. 238ff.).

I am thy helper, saith Jahweh,
Thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.
Behold! I make thee a threshing-wain,
A new one, furnished with teeth:
Mountains shalt thou thresh, and beat small,
And hills shalt thou make as chaff.
Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall sweep them away,
Yea, the whirlwind shall scatter them;
But thou shalt exult in Jahweh,
In the Holy One of Israel shalt thou glory (xli. 14–16).

No god of the nations ever foretold the future, still less put forth hand and strength to save his people; but Jahweh has not merely sent heralds of good tidings to Zion—already He is opening wells in the wilderness, and planting the desert with pleasant trees, that the return of the exiles may be a pilgrimage of gladness (*vv.* 17ff.). Then will Israel fulfil its ideal as the Servant of Jahweh, commissioned to carry His knowledge to all mankind, and to establish true religion in the earth.

Behold my servant whom I uphold,
My chosen, in whom my soul delighteth!
I have put my spirit upon him,
He shall bring forth judgment[1] *to the nations.*

He shall not cry, nor lift up,
Nor make his voice heard in the street;
A reed that is broken he shall not snap,
And a wick that flickers he shall not quench.

In truth shall he bring forth judgment,
He shall not flicker nor break,
Until in the earth he set judgment,
And the coastlands wait for his teaching (xlii. 1–4).

[1] מִשְׁפָּט, *judgment*, virtually equivalent to religion in its practical aspect.

The past history of Israel was a tragic contrast to this ideal. No nation was ever so blind and deaf to its Divine vocation as that which called itself Jahweh's servant and friend.[1] For its faithlessness Jahweh left it robbed and spoiled, 'all of them snared in holes and hidden in dungeons,' with none to say, 'Restore!' Even to the lesson of the Exile they were heedless, seeming to care nothing for the time to come (*vv.* 18ff.).

But now, thus saith Jahweh,
That created thee, O Jacob, and fashioned thee, O Israel:
Fear not, for I have redeemed thee,
I have called thee by my name[2]*—thou art mine.*
When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee,
And through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm thee;
When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned,
Neither shall the flame enkindle thee;
For I am Jahweh, thy God,
The Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.

I have given Egypt as thy ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for thee.
Since thou hast been precious in mine eyes,
An honoured one, whom I have loved—
Lo! I have given lands in exchange for thee,
And peoples for thy life.
From the East will I bring thy seed,
And from the West will I gather them;
I will say to the North, Give up!
And to the South, Withhold not!
Bring ye my sons from afar,
And my daughters from the end of the earth—
Even all who are called by my name,
Whom I have fashioned and made for my glory! (xliii. 1–7).

---

[1] מְשֻׁלָּם, or rather מְיֻשָּׁלָם (*v.* 19), *dedicated one, devotee* (cf. Arabic *muslim or Moslem*, the devotee of Allah).

[2] Read בִּשְׁמִי, *by my name* (as in *v.* 7).

From the beginning of its history Israel has burdened Jahweh with its sins, and wearied Him with its iniquities. Its first father Jacob sinned against Him; the prophets betrayed their trust, and the rulers profaned the sanctuary, so that Jahweh was compelled to put Israel to the ban, and expose it to revilings (xliii. 24ff.). But now,

Thus saith Jahweh thy Maker,
He that formed thee from the womb, and helpeth thee:
Fear not, Jacob my servant,
Jeshurun, whom I have chosen!
For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
And streams upon the dry ground;
I will pour my spirit upon thy seed,
And my blessing upon thine offspring.
And they shall spring up like grass among water,
As willows by running streams;
And one man shall say, 'I am Jahweh's,'
And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob;
And another shall write on his hand, 'Unto Jahweh,'
And shall surname himself by the name of Israel[1] (xliv. 2–5).

The past transgressions of His people Jahweh has even now blotted out like a thick cloud or mist, that no longer obscures the beauty of His countenance (*v.* 22); He has given commandment that Jerusalem and its Temple shall be rebuilt, and the waste places of Judah inhabited, and has anointed Cyrus as Shepherd and King, to gather together

[1] The last verses clearly refer to the ingathering of heathen peoples as proselytes within the spiritual community of Israel. The new names (surnames) and tattoo marks indicate their conversion to Israel's faith and worship.

His scattered flock, and 'fulfil all His pleasure' concerning Jerusalem (*vv.* 26–28).

Thus saith the Lord God
Unto Cyrus, His Anointed,
Whose right hand I have grasped,
To bring down nations before him,
To open doors at his presence,
And that gates shall not be shut:
Behold, I will march before thee,
And will level the rugged heights;
The doors of brass will I break in pieces,
And the bars of iron will I hew asunder;
I will give thee also treasures of darkness,
Even the hoards of secret places,
That thou mayest know I am Jahweh,
The God of Israel, that calleth thee by thy name.

For my servant Jacob's sake,
And Israel my chosen one,
I have called thee by thy name,
I have surnamed thee, though thou knewest me not.
I am Jahweh, and none else —
Beside me there is no God.
The loins of kings will I unloose,[1]
But thee will I gird, though thou knewest me not,
That men may know, from the rising of the sun,
And from the setting thereof, that there is none beside me.
I am Jahweh, and none else,
That doth fashion light and create the darkness,
That maketh weal and createth woe —
I Jahweh am He that doeth all these things (xlv. 1–7).

The amazing spectacle of Israel's salvation shall confound the heathen nations that oppressed and persecuted it; they shall now see that with Israel is 'the God that hid Himself' from their blind grop-

[1] Insert the superfluous phrase מָתְנֵי מְלָכִים אֲפַתֵּחַ before the broken parallel in *v.* 5*c* (Duhm, Marti, etc.).

ings, but henceforth reveals His glory as the only true God, the Creator and Saviour of mankind (xlv. 15f.). And with one accord they shall turn unto Him, and be saved.

Assemble yourselves and come, draw nigh together,
Ye remnants (escaped ones) of the nations!
Witless are they that bear (in procession) the wood of their images,
And pray to a God that cannot save.
Declare ye, and bring forth witness,
Let men hold counsel together!

Who did show this from of old,
Declared it aforetime?
Was it not I, even Jahweh,
No other God but me —
A righteous God, and a Saviour,
No one beside me?
Turn unto me, and be saved,
All ends of the earth!
For I am God, and none else,
By myself have I sworn!

Truth is gone out of my mouth,
A word that shall not return,
That to me shall bend every knee,
And every tongue shall swear!
'In Jahweh alone,' shall they say,
'I have victory and strength.'
And to him shall come abashed
All that were wroth with Him;
While in Jahweh shall all the seed of Israel
Find their triumph and glory (vv. 20–25).

The broad outlines of the drama are now clear. Jahweh is the only God, the Fashioner of heaven and earth, and the Moulder of human destiny. His eternal purpose is the salvation of the world; and Israel is the Servant through whom He will accom-

plish His purpose. On the sufferings and redemption of Israel the dramatic interest chiefly turns, and the radiant figure of Cyrus stands out as the anointed of Jahweh, raised up for its salvation. Jahweh has already laid mighty kings and nations captive at his feet; and Babylon shall soon share their doom. The prophet sees Bel and Nebo hurled from their lordly towers, and lying bent and crumpled on the ground, powerless to save their own images, which are 'heaped as a load upon weary cattle,' and carried into ignominious captivity (xlvi. 1f.). Then he raises his dirge over 'the virgin daughter of Babel,' that mistress of kingdoms, who sat securely, and said in her heart, 'I am, and no one beside me,' but now shall be plucked from her throne, and made to strip off her train, unbare her thigh and wade through the streams, and in an alien land take the mill-stones and grind the meal, like the unhappy slaves that were the victims of her present cruelty (ch. xlvii.). To Israel the downfall of Babylon is the summons to depart, and the knell gives place to a merry peal of victory.

Go out from Babel,
Flee from the Chaldees!
With loud song proclaim ye,
Make this to be heard!
Carry it forth
To the end of the earth!
Say, Jahweh hath ransomed
Jacob His servant!

They thirsted not
When He led them through wastes.
Water from the rock
He made flow for them;
He cleft the rock,
And the waters gushed forth (xlviii. 20f.).

With the near prospect of deliverance the Servant can look forward to the fulfilment of his mission. His past labours have been in vain, but Jahweh is with him, and will allow none of his work to fall to the ground.

Listen, ye coastlands, to me—
Hearken, ye peoples afar!
Jahweh hath called me from the womb,
From the bowels of my mother He mentioned my name.

He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
In the shadow of His hand He hid me;
He made me a polished arrow,
In His quiver He concealed me.

He said to me, 'Thou art my servant,
Israel, in whom I will make myself glorious.'
Thus honoured I was in the sight of Jahweh,
And my God became my strength.[1]

As for me—I said, 'In vain have I laboured,
Idly, for nought, have I spent my strength;
Nevertheless, my right is with Jahweh,
And my reward with my God.'

And now thus saith Jahweh,
Who formed me from the womb to be His servant,
That He might bring back Jacob to Himself,
And that Israel should be gathered unto Him:[2]

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[1] The loosely hanging *v.* 5*c* attaches itself most naturally to this context.

[2] The rendering of the A.V. and R.V., which is followed by Davidson, Skinner, Whitehouse, and the majority of Comment-

'Too light a thing it is (for me)[1] to upraise the tribes of Jacob,
And the preserved of Israel to restore;
So I make thee a light of the nations,
That my salvation may reach to the end of the earth' (xlix. 1-6).

Already in imagination the prophet descries the sons of Zion gathering unto her from North and East and West, and even 'from the land of the Sinites,'[2] their merciful Friend leading them by green pastures and living fountains of water, opening paths for them over the mountains, and preserving them from hunger and thirst, sun and sirocco (*vv.* 8–12). Zion herself stands amazed and bewildered at the sight. She has been left so long forsaken—bereaved of her children, and it seemed forgotten by her God—that she cannot understand whence these have come.

ators, draws a distinction between the Servant and Israel as a whole, the former being limited to the loyal Israel—the invisible Church of that age—through whose faithful witness and sufferings the sinful people was first to be restored, and Jahweh's salvation thereafter extended 'to the end of the earth.' It is more in harmony with the general view-point of the prophecy, and the express identification of the Servant with Israel in *v.* 3, to regard Jahweh as the subject of the following infinitive, and to see in the restoration of the Servant = Israel the beginning of His purpose of universal salvation (cf. Peake, *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*, pp. 46f.).

[1] Alike on grounds of metre and sense the limiting phrase מִהְיוֹתְךָ לִי עֶבֶד, *for thy being a servant unto me*, should be omitted (cf. Cheyne, Peake, Box, etc.).

[2] The land of the Sinites is most probably Syene (Assouan), where a Jewish colony had for some time been settled (cf. the Assouan papyri).

Thou shalt say in thine heart,
Who bare me these?[1]
I am bereft and barren,
And these—who reared them?
Behold, I am left alone,
And these—how are they? (xlix. 21).

But Jahweh has not really forsaken Zion. She and her children have wandered far from Him, she has let herself even be sold for her iniquities, but He has sent her no 'bill of divorcement'—she is still His bride. He can still less forget her than a mother her sucking child; her image He has graven on His palms, her walls are ever before His eyes (*vv.* 14ff.). Soon He will bring back her children, and will crown both her and them with garlands of glory.

Behold! I will lift up my hand to the nations,
And to the peoples raise my banner;
And they shall bring thy sons in their bosom,
And thy daughters shall be borne on their shoulder;
And kings shall be thy foster-fathers,
And queens thy nursing mothers.
With their faces to the earth shall they pay thee homage,
And shall lick the dust of thy feet;
Then shalt thou know that I am Jahweh
In whom none that trust shall be put to shame.

Can the prey be snatched from the strong man,
Or the tyrant's captives escape?
Even should the captives of the strong one be taken,
And the prey of the tyrant rescued—
Yet thy cause will I take up,
And thy children will I save.

[1] The allusion is almost certainly to the Oriental custom of securing offspring through a slave-girl (cf. Gen. xvi. 2; xxx. 3).

But thine oppressors will I cause to eat their own flesh,
And they shall be drunken with their own blood as with must;
And all flesh shall know that I Jahweh am thy Saviour,
And thy Redeemer the Mighty One of Jacob (*vv.* 22–26).

Once more the Servant takes up his oracle. He has lent his ear diligently to Jahweh's word, and for His sake has endured persecution and despite. But through all his sufferings he has found Jahweh an ever present help, and has never been put to confusion.

The Lord Jahweh hath given unto me
The disciples' tongue,
That I may learn how to succour
The weary with words.

Each morning He wakeneth mine ear
To hear like disciples;[1]
And I have not been rebellious,
I have turned not backward.

My back I gave to the smiters,
And my cheeks to the pluckers of hair;
My face I concealed not
From shame and spitting.

The Lord Jahweh doth help me,
Thus am I not confounded;
I have set my face like a flint,
And I know I shall not be ashamed.

Near is my Justifier, who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together!
Who is mine adversary (in judgment)?
Let him draw near to me!

Behold! the Lord Jahweh doth help me;
Who then shall condemn me?

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[1] I have omitted two superfluous phrases, which are probably but variants.

Behold! they shall all wear out like a garment,
The moth shall devour them (l. 4–9).

In answer to His Servant's trust, Jahweh assures all those who follow after righteousness that their deliverance is nigh, and that the present revilings and contempt will yield to everlasting glory.

Attend unto me, O my people,
O nation of mine, give ear unto me!
For teaching shall go forth from me,
And my judgment for a light of the peoples.
Soon will I bring near my righteousness,
And mine arms shall judge the peoples;
The coastlands shall wait for me,
And on mine arm shall they put their trust.

Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
And look on the earth beneath;
For the heavens shall vanish like smoke,
And the earth shall wear out like a garment.
The world and the inhabitants thereof shall perish,
They shall die like gnats;[1]
But my salvation shall be for ever,
And my righteousness shall not fail.

Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness,
The people in whose hearts is my teaching:
Fear not the reproach of men,
Nor be dismayed at their revilings!
For the moth shall devour them like a garment,
And the worm as wool;
But my righteousness shall be for ever,
And my salvation age after age (li. 4–8).

Jahweh has taken the cup of reeling from the hands of Zion, and passed it over to those that afflicted her, who made her back like a street

[1] After תִּבְלֶה insert תֵּבֵל, and for כְּמוֹ־כֵן read כְּמוֹ־כִנִּים (Weir, Cheyne, etc).

for the wayfarers (*vv.* 21–23). Now He calls her to awake, and put on her festal garments, to meet the triumphal procession, and rejoice in Jahweh's return.

Awake! awake! clothe thee
With thy strength, O Zion!
Clothe thee with thy garments of beauty,
Jerusalem, the Holy City!
For now shall there no more come unto thee
Uncircumcised or unclean.

Shake thyself from the dust, arise,
Thou captive Jerusalem!
Loose the bands of thy neck,
Thou captive daughter of Zion! [1]

* * *
* * *

Lo! hastening [2] *over the mountains*
The feet of the herald,
That proclaimeth weal, that bringeth good tidings,
That proclaimeth deliverance —
That saith unto Zion, 'Thy Redeemer is come,[3]
Thy God doth reign!'

All thy watchmen lift up the voice,
Together they sing;
For eye to eye they behold
The return of Jahweh to Zion.
Break forth into song together,
Ye waste places of Jerusalem!
For Jahweh hath comforted His people,
He hath redeemed Jerusalem (lii. 1–9).

With the return to Zion the Servant is exalted in glory. The nations see his stricken form, and

[1] The intervening *vv.* 3–6 are a prosaic intrusion, which has probably displaced one or more of the original couplets.

[2] Read הִנֵּה מְמַהֲרוֹת (Cheyne, Box, etc.).

[3] Some such phrase is necessary to complete the parallelism.

acknowledge that he has borne their sins and carried their sorrows, and that through his stripes they are healed. Jahweh accepts the offering of his soul, heals his sickness, restores him even from the dead, and gives him the victor's portion.

Behold! my servant shall triumph,
He shall be uplifted, and exalted very high:
As many were appalled at him,
So shall they now be amazed.[1]

Even many nations shall pay reverence to him,
Kings shall close their mouths;
For what had ne'er been told them do they see,
And what they ne'er had heard they now contemplate.

'But who could believe what we have heard,
And the arm of Jahweh[2]*—to whom hath it been revealed?'*
He grew like a sapling before us,
As a root from parched ground.

'No form was his that we should look on him,[3]
No (beauty of) face that we should desire him:
Marred was his face from a man's,
And his form from the sons of men.[4]

'He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sufferings, acquainted with sickness;
And as one from whom men hide their face,
He was despised, and we regarded him not.

---

[1] Here too the text is mutilated. Suggestions of the original are gained from LXX and elsewhere (cf. Kittel's notes).

[2] That is, the manifestation of Jahweh's power in the destiny of His suffering Servant. The speakers are most naturally identified with the heathen nations introduced in lii. 15.

[3] The text is here somewhat overladen. I have retained וְנִרְאֵהוּ, in the interests of parallelism.

[4] I have followed a number of recent scholars in transferring li. 14*b* to what seems its natural place in the poem.

' But 'twas our sickness he bore,
And our sufferings he carried,
While we accounted him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted!

' Yea, he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastisement of our peace was on him,
And by his stripes healing was brought us.

' All we like sheep went astray,
We turned every one his own way;
And Jahweh laid upon him
The guilt of us all.

' When oppressed, he bore it humbly,
And opened not his mouth,
Like a sheep that is led to the slaughter,
Or a ewe that before her shearers is dumb.

' Barred out [1] *from justice he was taken away,*
And his fate—who took thought thereon?
How he was torn from the land of the living—
For the peoples' transgression [2] *was smitten to death!*

' They made his grave with the wicked,
His tomb with felons,
Although he had done no violence,
Nor was any deceit in his mouth.

' But as Jahweh was pleased to crush him,
And afflicted him with sickness,
His soul shall He rescue from trouble,
And make him see fulness of light.

' Once his soul hath made a guilt-offering,
(His life shall he renew;)

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[1] For מֵעֹצֶר, *from oppression and*, read עוּצָר, *shut out, excluded.*

[2] Instead of מִפֶּשַׁע עַמִּי, *for the transgression of my people*, it is necessary to read either the plural עַמִּים (as above) or מִפִּשְׁעֵנוּ, *for our transgressions* (Budde, Peake, etc.).

He shall see a seed (posterity), shall lengthen his days,
And the pleasure of Jahweh shall prosper in his hand.'[1]

Yea, many shall my righteous servant justify,
And shall bear their iniquities;
Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great,
And spoil shall he share with the mighty.

For that he poured out his soul unto death,
And was numbered with transgressors;
Yea, he bore the sin of many,
For transgressors he interposed (lii. 13–liii. 12).[2]

With this great oracle the prophecy of comfort reaches its climax. The past shame of Israel is turned into glory; and Zion shall henceforth enlarge her tent, and shall spread forth her curtains without limit, until all nations are gathered within

[1] The text of *vv.* 10f. is sadly corrupt and uncertain. Emendations are as varied as the tastes of individual critics. I have taken the first couplet of *v.* 11 as the sequel to 10*a*, treating the remaining part of *v.* 10 as a fresh stanza, forming a natura transition to Jahweh's words in *vv.* 11f. On textual alterations cf. Kittel's notes.

[2] In this Song the personification is so pronounced that even scholars who start from the collective interpretation (*e.g.* Delitzsch and G. A. Smith) apply the prophecy to an individual, either a suffering contemporary or the Messiah, now viewed as the sin-bearer for his people. But the portrait is rather composite than individual, traits being drawn from the experience of many a suffering servant of Jahweh, though the influence of Jeremiah is specially marked. It seems more reasonable, therefore, to identify the Servant throughout with the people of Israel, 'regarded in the light of its purpose in the mind of God' (Peake, *Problem of Suffering*, p. 193). This prophecy likewise Jesus fulfilled, not by any mechanical correspondence with the details of the picture, but by identifying Himself perfectly with the mission of the Servant—by both living and dying as the true Israel of God.

the cords of her influence (liv. 1ff.). No more shall Jahweh be wroth with her, but will love her with love everlasting.

Though the mountains remove, and the hills be shaken,
My love shall remove not from thee ;
And my covenant of peace shall not be shaken,
Saith Jahweh thy Comforter (*v.* 10).

To the hungry and thirsty sons of Zion scattered over all the earth a gracious invitation is extended to share in the glories of the New Jerusalem ; and the prophecy closes in an idyll of peace and joy.

Ho ! every-one that thirsteth, come to the waters,
And ye that have no bread,[1] *eat !*
Yea, come ! buy (*corn*) *without money,*
And wine and milk without price !
Why spend ye money for what is not bread,
And your earnings for what doth not satisfy ?
Only hearken to me, and eat what is good,
Let your soul be ravished with fatness ! [2]

For an everlasting covenant will I make with you,
Even the faithful kindness I promised to David.
As once I made him a witness to nations,
A prince and commander of peoples,
Lo ! thou too shalt call unto people thou knowest not,
And people that know thee not shall run unto thee,
For the sake of Jahweh thy God,
Even the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee.

Seek Jahweh, while He may be found :
Call Him, while yet He is near !

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[1] For the first בֶּסֶף we should doubtless read לֶחֶם (cf. *v.* 2). A few pointless repetitions have also been omitted.

[2] In *vv.* 3*a* and 7 the poem has been expanded by didactic appeals in the style of Deuteronomy ; on the other hand, the second *stichos* of *v.* 9 is missing.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways my ways, saith Jahweh.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
* * *
So are my ways higher than your ways,
And my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven,
And returneth not thither, unless it hath watered the earth,
And hath made it bring forth and bud,
Giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
So shall my word be that hath gone from my mouth:
It shall not return to me void,
But once it hath done that which I please,
And accomplished the thing whereto I did send it.

For with joy shall ye go forth,
And in peace shall ye be led;
The mountains and hills shall break before you into song,
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands:
Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree,
And instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle;
And to Jahweh 'twill be for a name,
For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off (ch. lv.).

CHAPTER XXI

Prophets of Restoration : Haggai and Zechariah

THE great Comforter of the Exile was not alone in his hopes of redemption. From the old motherland of Judah patriotic spirits followed with eager interest the triumphal progress of Cyrus, and hailed in him the destined conqueror of Babylon, and the liberator of their people. In the muster of Cyrus' hosts they could hear the voice of Jahweh summoning His warriors to battle against ' the pride of the haughty and the arrogance of tyrants ' (Isa. xiii. 1ff.), and already they raised their taunt-song against the daring oppressor, ' who smote the peoples in fury with smiting that ceased not, and trampled the nations in anger with trampling that stayed not,' who even scaled the heavens in his pride, and challenged the supremacy of the Most High, but was now hurled to the ground like Lucifer, and laid in Sheol like a corpse unburied (xiv. 4ff.). With mingled dread and expectation prophets set themselves on the watch-tower, to look for the cavalcade of horsemen that should bring the tidings of Babylon's

downfall, while they urged on Elam and Media to the attack (xxi. 1–10). Their agitation struck a chord even in the hearts of Edom and the Bedouin tribes of Arabia. Out of Mount Seir came voices anxiously inquiring when the day would break. 'Watchman, what hour of the night? Watchman, what hour of the night?' (*vv.* 11f.). The caravans of Dedan and Tema likewise hastened with bread and water for the fugitives, scattered before the sword and bow (*vv.* 13–15).[1]

By the spring of 539 Cyrus had established his supremacy in the North and West, and the way was open for the attack on Babylon. A strong hand no longer opposed him. Nabonidus, the last king of Babylonia, was a man of peace, devoted to the restoration of temples and the study of ancient records. His people were distracted and rebellious, many of them openly favourable to the invader. Cyrus himself claims that he entered the country at Marduk's command, and that the god marched at his side 'as friend and helper.' On the 14th of Tammuz (about the beginning of July) the outpost city of Sippar fell without a stroke, and two days later (the 16th of Tammuz) Babylon opened its gates to Gobryas, the commander-in-chief. In October 539 Cyrus made his triumphal

[1] These prophecies clearly date from the years immediately preceding the fall of Babylon, about the same time as Deutero-Isaiah.

entry into the city. Thus ignominiously did 'the glory of kingdoms' sink into Sheol.

Cyrus had quite different ideals of Empire from the Babylonian kings. Instead of gathering together the subject nations within the immediate shadow of the capital, his policy was to send the captives back to their original homes, where they might develop their own national life and character under the aegis of the Emperor.[1] His ideals were, in fact, those of the British Empire of the present day. In shaping them he was prompted, no doubt, purely by political motives, but to the prophets of Israel, with their eyes open to the inner springs of history, all else was subservient to the Divine purpose working through him for the advancement of the Kingdom.

The decision to liberate the captives of Israel must have been reached within a few months of the conquest. Sheshbazzar, a Persian satrap, was appointed as royal commissioner to carry through the Restoration, and with him were associated two representative Jews, Zerubbabel, grandson of king Jehoiachin, and Joshua, the son of Josadak, and grandson of Seraiah, the last chief priest of the Temple in Jerusalem. By Cyrus' permission they were to take as many as wished to return, with their

[1] On Cyrus' policy cf. his Cylinder Inscription, ll. 31f.: 'The gods who dwelt in Agadi, etc., I brought back to their places, I caused them to inhabit a permanent abode. All their inhabitants I assembled, I re-erected their dwellings.'

servants and personal belongings, and all that remained of the Temple treasures. The summer of 538 B.C. saw the pilgrim bands already on the march, retraversing the road over which they and their fathers had been dragged under other auspices, some sixty years before. Songs of praise and hope lightened the hardships of the journey, and early in the following year they found themselves once more within the precincts of the Holy City. An altar was erected on the Temple site, and the daily worship of Jahweh resumed. Already perhaps they dreamed their dreams of Zion established above all the mountains of the earth, with the heathen nations streaming to it for instruction in the ways of Jahweh, and dwelling together in peace under the sceptre of the King of righteousness (Isa. ii. 1–4; xi. 1–9). But the sight of the grass-grown walls and blackened ruins of Jerusalem soon damped their enthusiasm. Nor was there anything in their personal surroundings to rekindle the flame. The ground was hard and impoverished, the harvests lean, the 'people of the land' were jealous and suspicious, and their heathen neighbours hostile. It seemed as if God Himself had forsaken them, caring nothing for the honour of His House and people. Thus the building of the waste places ceased, the harassed people contenting themselves with simple homes for themselves and their children.[1]

[1] The account of the Return in Ezra i.-iv. betrays in certain

From this inaction they were roused by the reflex of kaleidoscopic changes in Eastern history.

Cyrus died in 529, and was succeeded by his wild and reckless son, Cambyses 'the mad.' His victories in Egypt were unable to undo the evil effects of his cruelty and caprice, and the brilliant achievements of Cyrus appeared destined to swift ruin, when in 522 Cambyses committed suicide, throwing the prize of Empire open to the strongest hand. After a few months' usurpation by the ignoble Gaumata, who pretended to be Smerdis or Barada, the second son of Cyrus, the reins were seized by Darius, the son of Hystaspes, the ablest and noblest born of living Persians (521 B.C.). His accession was hotly disputed, and insurrections broke out in most of the provinces. The Jews were conspicuous for their loyalty to the new monarch, and this naturally predisposed him in their favour. The hope of better things began to stir in the hearts of the troubled community, and in tune with this hope the voice of prophecy sounded out anew, interpreting the meaning of events, and summoning them to play their part in the crisis, like true children of the Eternal.

The first prophecy of Haggai is dated on the first day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius

respects the influence of later events (*e.g.* the number of returned exiles and the laying of the foundation-stone); but there is no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of the narrative. Cf. Wellhausen, *Die Rückkehr der Juden aus dem Babylonischen Exil* (1895); G. A. Smith, *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, ii. 204ff.

(Aug. 520). The people had just passed through another of those bad harvests which combined with the general misery of their lot to depress and dishearten them. Haggai met their despondency by a stern call to duty. They bemoaned their poverty. They sowed much, but brought in little; they ate, but had not enough; they drank, but were never satisfied; they clothed themselves, but could not get warm; they earned wages, but only to pour them into a purse with holes! Yet what else could they expect, when they themselves dwelt in panelled houses, and left the house that was called by Jahweh's name to lie in ruins? Let them away with their selfish indulgence, and get them to the hill-country, and hew down wood, and bring it hither to build the house! Then would Jahweh look down with favour upon them, and give them bread and water, and clothing and comfort, even well-being in abundance; else must the heavens continue to withhold their dew, and the earth her fruit (i. 2–11).

The note is very different from that struck by Amos and Isaiah. Prophecy is definitely passing into legalism. We have seen, however, that legalism also has its part to play in the history of redemption. The time was not yet come when all the Lord's people could be prophets; and during the transition stage Law was needful to conserve the fruits of prophecy, and hand them down in their fresh vigour and maturity to the more spiritual age of the New

Covenant. The supreme mark of a prophet is to feel and express the need of the moment; and if Haggai's prophecy be concerned with nothing more spiritual than the hewing of wood and the building of stones, this was just what the hour demanded. Without the Temple of God in its midst, the struggling community must have lost its sense of the Divine presence, and the great work of prophets and evangelists would have fallen to the ground. Compared with the glorious themes committed to others, Haggai's message may seem a very humble one; but as a message for the times it holds its place in the grand roll of prophecy, and equally with these nobler oracles bears on its title-page the 'image and superscription' of the King.

As the result of Haggai's challenge, the conscience of the people was moved, and under the guidance of their two heads, Zerubbabel and Joshua, they set themselves as one man to the work of restoration. On the four and twentieth day of the same month the foundation-stone was laid amid demonstrations of joyful enthusiasm (cf. Ezra iii. 10ff.).[1] Haggai shared their gladness. For him that day was a beginning of days for Israel. Let the people look back and consider how it fared with them in the days before stone was laid to stone in the Temple! 'One

[1] The account in Ezra is probably an ante-dating of the event. Haggai and Zechariah know nothing of the laying of a foundation-stone in 536 B.C.

went to a corn-heap of twenty seahs, and there were but ten; another went to the winefat to draw off fifty troughfuls, and there were but twenty.' But in the happy future poverty and distress would be swallowed up in plenty. 'Consider, I pray you, from this day forward! Will the seed now remain (unsown) in the barn, and the vine and the fig-tree, the pomegranate and the olive-tree, any more withhold their fruit? Nay, from this day forward I will bless you, saith Jahweh of hosts' (ii. 15–19).[1]

For nearly four weeks the work went on with unflagging zeal. The design of the Temple was laid out, and the walls began to assume form. But the very success of their efforts became the occasion for renewed discouragement. Those that had seen the Temple in its former glory, and contrasted it with this makeshift of a building, hurriedly and roughly pushed toward completion, had no more spirit for the work, and by their own depression tended to discourage more ardent workers as well. Once more Haggai took up his oracle, and with strong words of faith and cheer upheld the sinking hands of his brethren. 'Courage, Zerubbabel! courage, Joshua! and courage, all ye people of the land! saith Jahweh.

[1] This prophecy seems clearly to date from the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone, and finds its natural place in the context of i. 12–15. The introduction to the 'message' is probably to be sought in *v.* 13, which is universally recognized as an intrusion between *vv.* 12 and 14. On necessary changes and omissions in the text, cf. Kittel's notes.

Work on ! for I am with you, and my Spirit abideth with you.' This may be the day of small things, yet ' fear ye not ! For thus saith Jahweh of hosts : In a little while I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land ; I will also shake all the nations, and the desirable things of all the nations shall come (unto you), and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jahweh of hosts. For mine is the silver, and mine the gold, saith Jahweh of hosts. And greater shall be the latter glory of this house than the former, saith Jahweh of hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith Jahweh of hosts (ii. 1–9).

Yet another temptation faced the toil-worn builders. Their bitter adversaries, the Samaritans, heard that the work was actually in progress, and begged for permission to help them, for ' we seek your God as ye do ' (Ezra iv. 1f.).[1] If Zerubbabel and Joshua were ever minded to accept their help, Haggai was uncompromising. ' Thus saith Jahweh of hosts : Ask now a deliverance of the priests as follows. If a man be carrying flesh that is holy in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt touch bread or pottage or wine or oil or any kind of food, shall the latter become holy ? And the priests answered and said, No ! Then Haggai said, If one that is made unclean by a corpse touch

[1] Here too the editor of Ezra appears to have ante-dated events.

any of these, shall it become unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall.' In other words, the unclean has far more power to infect than the holy to sanctify. 'Then answered Haggai and said, So is this people and so is this nation (the Samaritans) before me, saith Jahweh; and so is all the work of their hands—even that which they offer you there is unclean' (ii. 10–14).[1]

The definite rejection of the Samaritan offer called forth a closing oracle from Haggai, dated the same day as the last, the four and twentieth day of the ninth month (Dec. 520). Because the people had been loyal to their God, and had put away the unclean thing from their midst, He would preserve them through all the perils and catastrophes of the time. While kingdoms were shaken, and chariots and horsemen overthrown in battle, while even the heavens and earth were moved, Judah should abide in peace, and Zerubbabel be kept as a signet-ring on Jahweh's hand; for he was the chosen one, called and anointed to accomplish His purpose, said Jahweh of hosts (ii. 20–23).

Though the accent is different, the spirit of the

[1] The usual interpretations of this passage are very unsatisfactory. I have followed Rothstein in his identification of 'the people' with the Samaritans, whose syncretistic faith was more likely to corrupt the purity of the young Jewish Church than their faint touch of sanctity to leaven the idolatrous heart of their neighbours (*Juden und Samaritaner*, pp. 4off.).

older prophets is alive in Haggai. A keen sense of duty, with unerring insight into the needs of the moment, finds its counterpart in a feeling of tender sympathy for his people. When the hour has struck for action, he is emphatic in his call to duty; but as the day of toil drags on, and the spirit begins to droop, he has also the word in season which quickens and sustains the weary, the assurance that God is with His faithful servants, and that their labour is not fruitless. He is equally inspired by that unfailing hope which pulsed in the heart of all true prophets, that the best is still to come, that even the brightest glories of the past are not to be compared with those which God is yet to reveal.

In his efforts to stimulate the energies of his people Haggai was nobly seconded by a younger contemporary, Zechariah son of Berechiah, a scion of the distinguished priestly family of Iddo. Haggai's prophecy is confined to the first four months of the Temple-building. He was an old man when he began to speak—there is some ground for classing him among those who had seen the former Temple—and probably he died while the work was still unfinished. Zechariah commenced his ministry two months after Haggai, in the eighth month of the second year of Darius (Oct. 520 B.C.), and continued to uphold the hands of the builders till the completion of their task was in sight. In his prophecies, therefore, we are able to follow at first hand the

hopes and ideals that inspired the people of Jerusalem during these critical months.[1]

Like other prophets, Zechariah is immersed in the style and thought of those through whom God spoke in earlier days. He even appeals directly to their words: 'Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets preached, saying, Thus saith Jahweh of hosts, Turn now from your evil ways and from your evil doings' (i. 4). The dead tradition of prophecy, however, means as little for him as it did for Hosea or Jeremiah. When he cites the former prophets, it is not their personal authority to which he appeals, but the living Word of God to which each in his own way bore witness. 'Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever? But my words and my statutes, with which I charged my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers?' And these words and statutes are as powerful to-day as ever they were (*vv.* 5f.).

The spiritual ideals which Zechariah cherishes are likewise in perfect harmony with those of the former prophets. Haggai had been supremely concerned about the building of the Temple; his successor is much more anxious to have the life of the people made conformable to their faith. His hopes for

[1] The genuine prophecies of Zechariah are confined to ch. i.–viii., the rest of the book being a later piece of Apocalypse (cf. pp. 325ff.).

Jerusalem are as high as any prophet's, but he sees the city no more exalted on its mountain-top above all the cities of the earth, rather as a spreading cluster of villages without walls, resting in peace, with Jahweh's glory in the midst of them, and His encircling presence like a wall of fire about them (ii. 1–5).[1] And the true glory of Jerusalem is found in its devotion to Jahweh's will. Not fasts and mournful assemblies does He demand of His people, but thus saith Jahweh of hosts to them, 'These are the things that ye shall do: Speak every man truth with his neighbour, and execute wholesome judgment in your gates; and let none of you devise evil in his heart against his neighbour, nor take delight in swearing falsely; for all these things I hate, saith Jahweh' (viii. 16f.). In such words we catch the very echo of an Amos or Isaiah.

The mould, however, in which Zechariah enshrines his oracles is new. In him we find a definite approach to Apocalypse, that peculiar literary form under which spiritual truths are impressed, not by direct appeal to heart and conscience, but by elaborate visions of the transcendental world, addressed to the imagination. The central portion of the book consists of a series of eight such

[1] A young apprentice hand is about to lay out Jerusalem as a walled fortress, when an angel from Jahweh interrupts him. The new ideal is thus strikingly contrasted with the old. Cf. G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, i. 285ff.

visions—dated the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (Feb. 519)—representing various phases of the problem which confronted Zechariah and his associates, and all instinct with the hope of a glorious future for Jerusalem.

In the first of these visions the prophet is walking with his companion angel—the Interpreter of dreams—in a lovely myrtle-clothed Glen near the city. His eyes are opened, and he sees a Man among the myrtles, and beside Him four horsemen, riding on horses ruddy, bay, white and black (symbolical of the four quarters of heaven), who have returned from 'scouring to and fro through the earth.' The Man is Jahweh, and the horsemen are His scouts, who have been patrolling among the nations, to bring Him report of the signs of the times.[1] They have caught no glimpse of a better dawn. The nations all rest in careless security, indifferent to Jahweh and His people. The Interpreter asks impatiently how long Jahweh will continue to withhold His promised mercy to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against whom He has shown His indignation these threescore and ten years. Jahweh answers with kind and comforting words. He is very jealous for Jerusalem and Judah, and sore displeased with the nations that dwell at ease, who have aggravated the evil He wrought His people in the time of His passing displeasure. 'Therefore

[1] On the necessary emendations of the text cf. Kittel's notes.

thus saith Jahweh, I have returned to Jerusalem with tender compassions. My house shall be built in her, saith Jahweh of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched over Jerusalem. So proclaim once more, saying, Thus saith Jahweh of hosts, My cities shall yet overflow with prosperity, and Jahweh shall yet have compassion on Zion, and shall yet make choice of Jerusalem' (i. 7–17).

The same glad assurance of coming salvation is conveyed through the second of the visions, that of the four horns, emblematic of the tyrannous might of Judah's oppressors in the four corners of the earth, which four smiths are sent from Jahweh to file away (*vv.* 18-21). This is followed by the exquisite vision of Jerusalem as a city of unwalled villages, encircled by the glory of God, to which reference has already been made.[1] In the fourth vision Joshua the high priest is seen standing before the angel of Jahweh, robed in filthy garments, with the Satan as accuser, opposing his claim to acceptance with God; but at Jahweh's command he is stripped of his filthy garments, invested with festal apparel, and crowned with a clean turban, as a symbol of his authority to rule the house of Jahweh, and to watch over His courts in righteousness and purity, with freedom to approach God's presence,

[1] The immediately succeeding verses (ii. 6–13) belong to an earlier song of Restoration, in the spirit and style of Deutero-Isaiah.

and stand in the council of His holy ones, as a priest after His own heart. Joshua is here the spiritual representative of his people, who are as 'a brand plucked out of the fire;' he and his fellow-priests who sit in assize before him are a 'sign' or portent of the glory that shall yet be revealed in all of them.[1] As a token of this coming glory a stone sparkling with seven 'eyes' or facets is set before Joshua—the head-stone of the new Temple radiant with the light of God's countenance—and on it Jahweh engraves with His own hand the 'graving' or inscription of the House, while that same day He removes the iniquity of the whole land, and blesses His people with the fruits of holiness and peace (iii. 1–10).[2] To Zerubbabel also a word of great encouragement is given. His hands have laid the foundation-stone of the House, and his hands also shall finish it. A mountain of difficulty appears now to rise up before him; but the mountain shall become a plain, and he shall place the head-stone on

[1] The purified priests are portents of the general glory that shall descend upon the purified people, rather than forerunners in a special sense of the Messiah. The allusion to the Branch or Shoot is borrowed from vi. 12, where it clearly applies to Zerubbabel.

[2] The stone has been variously identified with the jewel on the high priest's robe, the altar, the foundation-stone of the Temple, the head- or cope-stone, and the Temple itself. The identification with the cope-stone seems most appropriate to the context. In his vision Zechariah can already see the Temple completed—a promise of all other good things for his people.

the building amid shoutings of 'Beautiful, beautiful!' Then shall all the people recognize that Jahweh of hosts has been with them; for 'not by armed force or by strength' has this work been done, 'but by My Spirit, saith Jahweh of hosts' (iv. 6*b*–10*a*).[1] In the fifth vision Jahweh's abiding presence in the Temple is symbolized by the golden Candlestick with its seven lights—the seven eyes of God 'that flash over all the earth'—while to right and left of the Candlestick stand two olive trees—the two 'sons of oil,' or anointed leaders of the people—Joshua and Zerubbabel, the representatives of Church and State, the Aaronic priesthood and the Davidic monarchy—'that stand by the Lord of all the earth,' and mediate His grace to men (*vv.* 1–6*a*, 10*b*–14).[2]

In the next two visions the prophet returns to the purging of Israel's sin. A winged volume of curses is seen flying through the land, to roost on

[1] These verses are universally recognized as an interpolation in their present context, and are usually inserted after ver. 14. To the present writer they appear to attach themselves more naturally to the preceding vision. We have thus an easy transition to the picture of Joshua and Zerubbabel as the two 'sons of oil.'

[2] The olive trees are often regarded as the feeders of the candlestick (cf. G. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 298f.). This interpretation rests mainly on the awkwardly intrusive *v.* 12. In the original sequence of the vision, Jahweh Himself is the Light, and the 'sons of oil' derive all their light from Him. Thus Church and State are not the 'sustainers' of revelation, but the main channels through which it blesses and fructifies the earth.

the houses of all thieves and perjurers, and consume them to the foundation, both beam and stone (v. 1–4). The guilt of the people, concentrated in the person of the woman Wickedness, is then sealed up in an ' ephah ' or barrel, and borne on the stork-like wings of the wind to distant Shinar or Babylonia, where it can no longer pollute ' the redeemed of the Lord ' (*vv.* 5–11). A closing vision—that of the four chariots facing the four winds of heaven—symbolizes the going forth of Jahweh's judgment on the nations that oppressed Israel, beginning with the North, the centre of the Babylonian tyranny (vi. 1–8). The people are thus left free to crown Zerubbabel, the legitimate Shoot of the tree of David, with a crown of silver and gold, sent as a tribute of thanksgiving by the exiles in Babylonia, that he may sit on the throne of his fathers and uphold its former splendour, a ' counsel of peace ' binding him and Joshua the high priest, so that harmony and goodwill shall prevail throughout the land (*vv.* 9–15).[1]

Amid such bright dreams of future glory the building rose toward completion. Soon priests ministered in the Temple as of old, and the festal

[1] The text has been rather seriously mutilated, to bring the prophecy into harmony with the later position of the priesthood in Judah. According to the evident import of the passage, Zerubbabel is crowned king, while Joshua stands beside him as priest, a perfect spiritual harmony existing between them. On the necessary emendations of the text cf. Kittel's notes.

round was celebrated with the ancient joy. As the month of fasting drew nigh, men asked if they should still lament and humble themselves for the sorrows of Jerusalem. Nay! answered Zechariah in a last radiant oracle, dated on the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius (Dec. 518). The days of fasting and mourning are over. Jahweh is now returned unto Zion, and will dwell henceforth in the midst of Jerusalem; He will likewise redeem His exiled people from both East and West, and plant them in the midst of Jerusalem, and they shall be His people, and He their God, in truth and in righteousness. Then shall the city be known as 'the city of Truth,' and the mountain of Jahweh of hosts shall be named 'the Holy Mountain' (viii. 3). The time of stress, too, shall have passed away for ever. 'Thus saith Jahweh of hosts, Old men and old women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, every one with staff in hand for very age; and the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof' (*vv.* 4f.). And instead of the former leanness and famine there shall be sown through the land the seed of well-being. 'The vine shall yield her fruit, and the ground shall yield her increase, and the heavens shall yield their dew; and I will give all these things for an heritage to this remnant of people. And it shall come to pass that, as ye have been a curse among the nations, so now will I save

you, and ye shall be a blessing '—a centre of goodness and joy to all the world (*vv.* 10–17). 'The citizens of one city shall go to another, saying, Come, let us go to intreat the favour of Jahweh, even to seek after Jahweh of hosts; and we will go with you. And many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jahweh of hosts in Jerusalem, and to intreat the favour of Jahweh' by sacrifice in the Temple—so zealously, indeed, that 'ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you' (*vv.* 21–23).

CHAPTER XXII

Prophets of the New Jerusalem

THE brave words of Haggai and Zechariah were not fruitless. Within four years of the laying of the foundation-stone the Temple was completed and the ancient rites resumed with a great feast of dedication (B.C. 516). But the new age foretold by the prophets delayed its coming. The hopes they had centred in Zerubbabel were frustrated, and the Jews remained a subject people, hard pressed by their adversaries. Jerusalem looked the mere shadow of its former self, and the Temple was an object of contempt to its neighbours. Under these various disappointments the zeal of the people rapidly cooled: they became remiss in their service, withholding the tithes, and bringing to Jahweh's altar the poorest and sickliest of their flocks (Mal. i. 6ff.). Many abandoned the pure faith of their fathers, and adopted the worldly ways of the nations around them, setting their hearts on gain instead of goodness and mercy, defrauding the hireling of his wages, doing injustice to the widow, the fatherless and the stranger, and even cruelly

divorcing 'the wives of their youth' for the daughters of the heathen or half-caste Samaritans among whom they dwelt (ii. 11ff.). Nor did any evil befall them for their apostasy. Indeed, it seemed as if those most loyal to the Law had to bear the burden of their people's guilt, while 'every one that did evil was accepted as good in the sight of Jahweh, and He delighted in them' (ii. 17; iii. 14).

The crisis called for a prophet; and about the year 460—just before Ezra's first visit to Jerusalem—the word of the Lord came through 'Malachi.'[1] His prophecy is addressed to both classes of the people, those who had fallen away from the purity of their faith into worldliness and paganism, and such as took offence at Jahweh's ways, and asked why He allowed things to happen as they did. In simple, forceful prose, resembling the dialectical style of the Rabbi or teacher, he presses home the three fundamental principles of Israel's religion—the love of Jahweh for His people, His transcendent holiness or majesty, and His inflexible righteousness—and summons men to repentance, before the breaking of that great Day which shall try their works as by fire and consume the wicked like stubble in the furnace.

Jahweh's care for His people is pure and constant.

[1] The name Malachi is probably the generic מַלְאָכִי, *my messenger*, taken over from iii. 1. We have thus another example of an anonymous prophet.

From the very womb He loved Jacob, while Esau He despised and 'hated.' Therefore He looked for the honour a father expects of his son or a master of his servant (i. 2ff.). But they have dishonoured His name, polluting His altar with the sacrifice of beasts 'blind and lame and diseased'—offerings they would never dare present to the Persian governor—and counting His service a weariness to spirit and flesh. Such a travesty of worship Jahweh cannot accept. Rather than countenance it, He would have them shut the doors of the Temple altogether, that they may not kindle His altar in vain (*v.* 10). They treat Him far worse than the heathen who know not His name. In one of the most startling paradoxes of prophecy He claims to be more truly honoured among the nations than in the midst of His own people; for their worship, with all its grossness and ignorance, is worship from the heart, according to the lights of those who offer it. 'From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof my name is glorified among the nations; and in every sacred place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure sacrifice: for my name is great among the nations saith Jahweh' (*v.* 11).[1]

[1] The point of the paradox can hardly be turned by limiting the 'nations' to the Jewish Dispersion scattered so widely over the world, or even to the proselytes who gathered themselves around the fold of Israel. Malachi is contrasting the fidelity of the heathen to their worship with Israel's contemptuous treatment of Jahweh. It is significant, as Wellhausen has pointed

If the priests continue to despise the knowledge of God, and mislead the people by their witless instruction, He will 'hew off their arm'—rob them of all their assumed dignity and influence—and dishonour them openly before the people, that they may at last 'stand in awe of His name,' and learn by painful experience that 'the covenant with Levi'—the law of the priesthood—rests not on barren titles or words, but on faithfulness, sincerity and zeal for His service, inasmuch as the priest is 'the messenger of Jahweh of hosts' (ii. 1ff.).

What Jahweh demands, then, is reverent worship and sacrifice—the very best the people have to offer Him—in our own day He would have asked for a noble and beautiful service that is the genuine expression of loving, joyful devotion—but, along with this, respect also for the simple moralities of life—honesty in the law-courts and the market, with kindly regard for the poor and lonely, the widow, the orphan and the stranger—for all have one Father in God (*v.* 10). The prophet's sympathy is peculiarly awakened by the plaint of the deserted wives—those loyal daughters of the covenant, who had been companions to their husbands from youth, and had borne them sons and daughters—against whom the faithless men of Judah had dealt so treacherously.

out, that the prophecy is contemporaneous with the mighty uplift of the Greek spirit under Socrates and his school, and similar movements among other nations.

Such conduct was both inhuman and sacrilegious. The putting away of a virtuous wife was like 'covering the garment with violence'[1]—wronging one's own soul. It was equally an outrage on the God who both gave and preserved the spirit of life in men,[2] and made 'the seed of God'—the children of a pure and honourable marriage—a covenant of devotion between husband and wife (*vv.* 11ff.).

Thus Malachi brings Sabbath and week-day, the Temple and the city streets, the altar and the home, into perfect spiritual harmony. It is vain for men to 'cover the altar of Jahweh with tears,' and to lament that He regards their offerings no more, if they make their worship a mere cloak to cover their wickedness (*v.* 13). Let them but offer Jahweh His dues, and show the spirit of humanity one toward another, and He will 'open the windows of heaven and pour them out a blessing beyond measure;' He will likewise restrain 'the devourer' (locust) from destroying the fruits of the ground, and will not suffer the vine in the field to miscarry, so that the land of Israel shall once more be 'a delightsome land,' and the people be counted happy of all the nations of the earth (iii. 7ff.). The fearful souls, who repine at Jahweh's ways, can thus rest

[1] The metaphor is doubtless taken from the practice of throwing a garment over a woman in token of betrothal (cf. Ruth iii. 9), the betrothed one thus becoming part of his very life.

[2] On the reading cf. Kittel's notes.

themselves in confidence, for already He is sending His messenger to herald His approach, and soon He will come in Person to His Temple, and will purge the sanctuary 'like the fire of the smelter[1] and like fuller's lye,' wiping out from His people the false and apostate 'sons of Levi,' with the sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, and all who wrong and defraud their needier brethren (iii. 1ff.; iv. 1),—while for such as fear Jahweh, and think upon His name, there lies already written before Him 'a book of remembrance,' and on the day He stands forth to act He will count them His peculiar possession, and will spare them 'even as a man doth spare his son that serveth him' (iii. 16ff.). Of the wicked there shall be left 'neither root nor branch' in that day. 'But unto you that fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and skip as calves of the stall. And ye shall trample down the wicked; for they shall be as ashes beneath the soles of your feet in the day that I act, saith Jahweh of hosts' (iv. 1ff.).

To the same age of disillusionment, scepticism and apostasy belong the radiant chapters that close the book of Isaiah.[2] In feeling and imagination

[1] On ancient smelting cf. p. 164, n. 2.

[2] On the question of Trito-Isaiah (chs. lvi.-lxvi.) cf. any recent Commentary, *e.g.* Whitehouse, *Isaiah*. ii. 225ff., or Cheyne's monumental *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah*, pp. 310ff. The chapters hang somewhat loosely together, and were probably composed at intervals, though by the same author—within a

they may still remind us of the prophet of Comfort, but the historical background brings them rather into relation with Malachi, whose spiritual outlook also they share. The darkness of the Exile has been dispelled, and the people of Jahweh can once more worship Him in the Temple. But they are plunged in deep disquietude and depression because of the evils of the time. Their spiritual watchmen, the priests and prophets, are blind and senseless, unable to give heed to truth and righteousness; they are all 'dumb dogs, which cannot bark,' but lie down and dream, 'loving to slumber,' save when they fetch themselves wine, and are filled with strong drink, so 'greedy of appetite' that they can never have enough. Thus the beasts of the field and jungle—the jealous nations surrounding Judah—are continually breaking through the fences and devouring them (lvi. 9ff.). Even within the borders of the Holy Land grave disorders reign.

The righteous man perisheth,
Yet no one layeth it to heart;
And godly men are taken away,
Yet none regardeth it.
By reason of the evil (that prevaileth) the righteous is taken away,
He entereth into peace;
They rest upon their beds (graves)
Who have walked straightforward —

while their wicked oppressors make sport of them,

few years of the Reform under Ezra and Nehemiah. Only lxiii. 7–lxiv. 12 appear to belong to an earlier date, between 638 and 620 B.C.

opening wide their mouths, and shooting out the tongue, in contempt alike of their piety and of their unmerited fate (lvii. 1ff.). Through the corrupting influence of the Samaritan leaven the land is full of the grossest idolatry and vice (lvii. 3ff. ; lxv. 1ff.). But even where the purer faith is upheld, religion is too often divorced from morality. Men draw near to Jahweh, and keep His fasts and ordinances—but for their own comfort and glory. Of their debtors they relentlessly exact the pledge ; while for the poor, the hungry and the oppressed they have no room in their thoughts (lviii. 3ff.). Their hands are defiled with blood, and their fingers with iniquity; their lips have spoken lies, and their tongue muttereth wickedness. They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. And yet they ask why salvation is so far away ; why they should look for light, and behold darkness, for brightness, and they must walk in obscurity (lix. 3ff.).

The prophet is as insistent as Malachi that true devotion of heart and life is the one condition of salvation. At the very outset he strikes this note clear and strong. Jahweh's salvation is near to come, and His righteousness about to be revealed ; but they only shall taste the happiness of redemption who 'observe judgment (the Divine statutes of religion) and practise right (towards their neighbour),' even he 'that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any

evil ' (lvi. 1f.). Apart from such fidelity to God and His righteousness there is no limit to salvation. The eunuch who keeps the Sabbath, and chooses the things that please God, and the stranger from whatsoever nation who joins himself to Jahweh, and loves His name and service, shall be given an inheritance in His house ' better than that of sons and daughters,' and a name among His redeemed ones ' that shall not be cut off ' (*vv.* 3ff.). For in the brighter days about to dawn the temple of Jahweh shall be no sanctuary for the Jews alone, but ' shall be called an house of prayer for all the nations ' (*v.* 7).[1] As for the down-trodden people of Jahweh, who have held fast to His name through all darkness and oppression, let them lift up their eyes in hope, for already the light is breaking.

Cast up, cast up, level the way,
Remove the stumbling-block from the path of my people!
For thus saith the High and Exalted One,
That dwelleth (enthroned) for ever, whose name is Holy:
I dwell on high as the Holy One,
Yet with him that is broken and bowed in spirit,
To revive the spirit of the bowed,
And to revive the heart of the broken.
For not for ever will I strive (with my people),
And not continually be wroth —
Else the spirit would faint before me,
Even the souls which I have made.

For his sin was I wroth a moment,
And I smote him, while I hid my face in wrath.

[1] This passage (lvi. 1–8) attaches itself rather abruptly to the sequel. Probably there has been some dislocation of the context.

He walked rebelliously in the way of his heart,
And I saw his ways, saith Jahweh;
But now will I heal him, and cause him to rest,
And requite him with consolations.
For his mourners create I the fruit of the lips (*thankfulness*),
Peace, peace, to far and near.
But the wicked are like the uptossed sea,
For it cannot rest;
And its waters toss up mire and filth —
No peace, saith my God, for the wicked (lvii. 14–20).

Fasting and Sabbath-keeping are no substitute for contrition of heart. It is vain for men to seek God daily, and ask Him for righteous laws, 'as a nation that doeth righteousness, and forsaketh not the law of its God,' if they use His laws for their own profit, and fast 'for strife and contention, and smiting the poor with the fist.' Such fasting cannot make their voice to be heard on high (lviii. 4). In a tone of irony which recalls Amos the prophet turns upon these Pharisees who belie their faith by their deeds.

Is such the fast I choose—
A day for a man to mortify himself,
To bow down his head like a bulrush,
To grovel in sackcloth and ashes?
Wilt thou call this a fast,
A day of pleasure to Jahweh?

Nay, the true fast is a day of mercy and kindness.

Is not this the fast I choose,
(Saith Jahweh the Lord)—
To loosen the bonds of wickedness,
And undo the cords of violence; [1]

[1] For מוֹטָה, *yoke*, which has slipped in from the line below, read חָמָס, *violence* (Cheyne, Marti, etc.). On other emendations cf. Kittel's notes.

To let the oppressed go free,
And every yoke to snap;
To break for the hungry thy bread,
And the homeless to bring to thy house;
When thou seest the naked, to cover him,
And to hide not thyself from thy flesh?

If such be the fast-days they keep, healing will soon return to them, and Jahweh will lead them into fulness of light and joy.

Then shall thy light break forth as the dawn,
And thy healing shall spring forth speedily;
And thy right shall go before thee,
And the glory of Jahweh shall be thy rearguard.
Then shalt thou call, and Jahweh will answer,
Thou shalt cry, and He will say, 'Here am I.'
If thou wilt remove from thy midst the yoke,
The shooting of finger, and mischievous speech,
And wilt share thy bread with the hungry,
And sate the afflicted soul,
Then shall thy light stream forth in the darkness,
And thy murk shall be as noonday,
And Jahweh shall guide thee continually,
And shall sate thy soul in drought;
And thy strength shall He renew,
And thou shalt be as a watered garden,
And thy life like a bubbling spring,
Whose waters fail not;
And thy sons shall rebuild the ancient wastes,
The foundations of many generations shalt thou upraise;
And thou shalt be called the Repairer of the breach,
The Restorer of ruins as a dwelling-place (lviii. 5–12).

It was not because Jahweh's ears were too dull to hear, or His hand too short to reach them, that the time of salvation lagged. Their own sins were the barrier that restrained Him, the veil that obscured His face (lix. 1ff.). But soon the barrier

would be removed, and the flood-tide of grace sweep in like a rushing stream, driven by the breath of Jahweh (lix. 18f.). Then would dawn the morning of His favour, the day of eternal light.

Arise, shine! for thy light is come,
And the glory of Jahweh hath risen upon thee.
For, lo! darkness doth cover the earth,
And gross darkness the peoples;
But over thee Jahweh doth rise,
And His glory appeareth upon thee,
And nations come to thy light,
And kings to the gleam of thy rising.

Lift up thine eyes around, and behold!
All of them gather and come to thee—
From afar come thy sons,
While thy daughters are borne on the side.
Thou shalt see, and be radiant,
And thy heart shall tremble and throb;
For to thee shall be turned the wealth of the deep,
The riches of nations shall come unto thee.

A stream of camels shall cover thee,
The young camels of Midian and Ephah;
All those of Sheba shall come,
They shall bring frankincense and gold;
All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to thee,
The rams of Nebaioth shall eagerly seek thee;
They shall mount mine altar as a well-pleasing sacrifice,
And my house of prayer shall be glorified.

Who are these, now, that fly as a cloud,
Or like doves to their windows?
'Tis the ships a-gathering for me,
And foremost the galleons of Tarshish—
To bring thy sons from afar,
Their silver and gold with them,
For the name of Jahweh thy God,
The Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee

And the sons of the alien shall build thy walls,
And their kings shall serve thee;
For, though in my wrath I smote thee,
In my favour have I had compassion on thee.
And thy gates shall be open continually,
Day and night shall they not be closed,
That the riches of nations may be brought unto thee,
Their kings as leaders.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee,
The cypress, the pine, and the box together,
To adorn the place of my sanctuary,
And honour my footstool.
And the sons of thine oppressors shall come bending to thee,
Even all who despised thee shall bow at the soles of thy feet;
And thou shalt be called the City of Jahweh,
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

And, whereas thou hast been forsaken,
And hated, that none passed through thee,
I will make thee a glory for ever,
The joy of many generations.
Thou shalt drain the milk of the nations,
Even the breast of kings shalt thou suck;
And shalt know that I Jahweh am thy Saviour,
Even the Mighty One of Israel thy Redeemer.

For brass will I bring gold,
And for iron will I bring silver; [1]
And Peace will I make thy government,
And Righteousness thy rulers (lit. *taskmasters*).
Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
Rapine nor ruin within thy borders;
But thy walls shalt thou call Salvation,
And thy gates Renown.

No more shall the sun be thy light by day,
Nor the moon for brightness illumine thee;

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[1] The feeble couplet, 'And for wood brass, and for stones iron,' mars alike the beauty and the strophic structure of the piece.

But Jahweh shall be thine everlasting light,
And thy God thy glory.
Thy sun shall no more go down,
Nor thy moon withdraw itself;
For Jahweh shall be thine everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

And thy people shall be all of them righteous.
And shall inherit the land for ever,
As a scion of Jahweh's planting,
The work of His hands, that He may be glorified.
Then the small one shall become a clan,
Even the least a mighty nation;
I Jahweh have spoken the word—
In its time will I hasten it (lx. 1–22).

Under the inspiration of this glorious hope the prophet himself is caught up, and speaks as the Messenger of Jahweh, to whom is entrusted the Gospel of great joy.

The Spirit of the Lord Jahweh is upon me,
For Jahweh hath anointed me;
He hath sent me to bring good tidings to the lowly,
To bind the broken in heart,
To proclaim to the captives liberty,
And release to the bound,
To proclaim Jahweh's year of favour,
And the day of vengeance of our God —
To comfort all that mourn,
To give them laurel (lit. *an ornamented head-tire*) *for ashes,*
The oil of joy for the garment of mourning,
Praise for a fainting spirit,
That they may be called oak-trees of righteousness,
The planting of Jahweh, that He may be glorified.

And they shall build the ancient wastes,
Shall upraise the ruins of former days;
And shall renew the wasted cities,
The ruins of many generations.

And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
And aliens shall be your ploughmen and vinedressers;
But ye shall be called the priests of Jahweh,
The ministers of our God shall ye be named,
Ye shall eat the riches of nations,
And with their glory shall ye adorn yourselves.
For that their shame was double,
And abuse was the lot they inherited,
So now in their land shall they inherit double,
Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

For I Jahweh love justice,
I hate robbery and unrighteousness;
In truth, then, will I give them their recompense,
And an everlasting covenant will I make with them.
And their seed shall be known among the nations,
Their offspring in the midst of the peoples;
All that see them shall acknowledge them,
That they are the seed which Jahweh hath blessed.[1]
For as the earth putteth forth her shoots,
And a garden maketh its seed to sprout,
So Jahweh the Lord shall cause righteousness to shoot,
And praise before all nations.

For Zion's sake will I not keep silent,
And for Jerusalem will I not rest,
Till her righteousness (vindication) go forth as light,
And her salvation as a burning torch.
Then the nations shall see thy righteousness (vindication),
And all kings thy glory;
And a crown of beauty shalt thou be in the hand of Jahweh,
A royal diadem in the hand of thy God.
No more shalt thou be called Azubah (Forsaken),
Nor thy land Shomēmah (Desolate);
But thou shalt be called Hephzibah (My Delight in her),
And thy land Beulah (Married).
For Jahweh delighteth in thee,
And thy land shall be married.

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[1] lv. 10 is clearly out of place in this context, and should probably be inserted at the close of ch. lxii.

Even as a young man marrieth a maiden,
Thy Builder shall marry thee;
And as bridegroom rejoiceth over bride,
Thy God shall rejoice over thee (lxi. 1–lxii. 5).

Jahweh can never forget Zion. Over her walls He has set guardian angels, heavenly 'remembrancers,' who give Him no rest until He has established the city in glory, and made it the praise of all the earth (lxii. 6f.). Already He comes sweeping from Edom, His armour crimson with the blood of the enemies He has trampled in the winepress of His fury, to bring deliverance to Israel, and break their oppressors in pieces (lxiii. 1-6). The faithless and idolatrous—all who have given way to the degrading superstitions of their neighbours the Samaritans, or who keep up the ancient rites of Canaan—shall be cut off from the midst of the people, but the true Israel shall be saved with an everlasting salvation (lxv. 1ff.).

Thus saith Jahweh:
As the must is found in the cluster,
And one saith, Destroy it not!
For a blessing is in it;
Thus will I do for my servants' sake,
That I may not destroy the whole.
I will bring out of Jacob a seed,
From Judah an heir to my mountains;
And my chosen shall inherit the land,
My servants shall dwell therein.
And Sharon shall be a pasture for flocks.
And the valley of Achor a lair for cattle (vv. 8–10).

The former troubles shall all be forgotten, Israel

shall be called by a new name, and every one in the land shall acknowledge Jahweh as 'the God of truth.'

For behold! I create new heavens
And a new earth;
And the former things shall not be remembered,
Nor come into mind.
But men shall rejoice, and exult forever,
In what I create.
For behold! I create Jerusalem an exultation,
And her people a joy;
And I will exult in Jerusalem,
And rejoice in my people.
And no more shall be heard in her the sound of weeping,
Nor the sound of crying;
No more shall there go from thence
An infant of days,
Or an old man that doth not complete
His tale of days;
But the youngest of all shall die
An hundred years old.[1]

And they shall build houses, and dwell therein;
And shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.
They shall not build, and another inhabit;
Nor plant, and another eat.
For as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people,
And the work of their hands shall my chosen enjoy to the end.
They shall not labour in vain,
Nor give birth (to children) for destruction;

[1] In the glad days to come there will be no premature death: even an hundred years will be counted a short span. The final clause, 'and the sinner being an hundred years old shall be cursed,' emphasises the idea that even that age is premature, and is a sign of God's displeasure; but the prosaic quality of the remark, and the discord it introduces into the music of the prophecy, suggest that it is a later intrusion.

For a seed of Jahweh's blessed ones are they,
And their offspring (shall abide) with them.
Then, before ever they call, I will answer;
While yet they speak, I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb shall pasture together,
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox:
They shall not harm nor destroy
On all my holy mountain, saith Jahweh (lxv. 17–25).

The present sufferings are the birth-throes of Zion; and He who has brought to the birth will give her a mother's joy in full measure. Her children also will find in her bosom rich and abiding delight.

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and exult in her,
All ye that love her!
Joy joyfully with her,
All ye that mourned for her!
That ye may suck, and be satisfied,
From the breast of her consolations;
That ye may drink, and delight yourselves,
From her rich mother's bosom.
For behold! I extend to her peace like a river,
And the splendour of nations like a sweeping torrent.
Her sucklings also shall be carried upon the side,
And be fondled upon the knees.
And as one whom his mother doth comfort,
So shall ye in Jerusalem be comforted.
And when ye see it, your heart shall rejoice,
And your bones shall flourish like spring grass (lxvi. 10–14).

While the hand of Jahweh thus rests in blessing upon Jerusalem, His wrath goes out in judgment against His enemies. Like tongues of fire His arrows smite them; with His flaming sword He hews them

down. But among the nations, too, judgment is swallowed up in mercy. The survivors see God's glory revealed in Zion, and come to rejoice in it. They send also to the furthest coastlands, to tell the glad tidings, and bring the scattered exiles of Israel from all the nations, as a freewill offering to Jahweh upon His holy mountain. Thus Zion's name and posterity continue for ever, a blessing to all the nations.

Behold! the time is come
To gather all nations and tongues:
They shall come, and shall see my glory,
And a sign will I set among them.
And I will send the escaped (of the judgment)
To the distant coastlands—
Such as have heard not my name,
Nor seen my glory.
They shall declare my glory among the nations,
And shall bring all your brethren from all the peoples,
For an oblation to Jahweh on my Holy Mountain,
Unto Jerusalem, saith Jahweh,
As the children of Israel bring oblation
In a clean vessel to Jahweh's house.
And of these too will I take
To be Levite priests, saith Jahweh.
For as the new heavens,
And the new earth that I do make
Continue before me, saith Jahweh,
So shall your seed and your name continue[1] (*vv.* 18–22).

[1] I have omitted various prosaic glosses and expansions in *vv.* 19f., also the last awful picture in *vv.* 22f., which reflects the common Jewish hatred of the nations (cf. most recent Commentaries).

CHAPTER XXIII

The Rise of Apocalypse

THE eye of prophecy has been turned increasingly towards the future. From the midst of the present gloom and dejection 'men of the Spirit' look for an inheritance of glory yet to be revealed. And the mould in which their hope is cast becomes definitely apocalyptic. The issues of history now converge upon a final judgment-scene, when the Ruler of the nations will separate the sheep from the goats, and will give His people Israel the dominion over all their enemies, within and without.

The simplest of these apocalyptic visions is contained in the ardent little book of Obadiah, the basis of which is an impassioned denunciation of Edom for the part she played in the tragedy of Judah's downfall. On the day when aliens entered the gates and cast lots upon Jerusalem, she was like one of them, and hissed and jeered over the destruction of the city, unmindful of the brotherly covenant. For this she must pay the traitor's penalty. Already she has had her foretaste of Divine judgment. In days gone by she dwelt in the clefts of the rock, puffed up with pride, and saying in her heart, 'Who

shall bring me down to the ground?' But Jahweh marked her confidence, and hurled her from her eyrie among the stars, making her an object of misery and contempt before all the world. Her very confederates—the friends who ate her bread—were foremost among those that plotted against her and drove her to the border.[1] And this is but the beginning of her woes. Robbers and vintagers might leave a gleaning behind them, but Jahweh will search out all the hidden treasures of Edom, stripping her of her boasted wisdom and pride of understanding, and leaving her forlorn and abashed for ever. As she has done unto others, it shall be done unto her: due requital shall descend upon her head (*vv.* 1–14, 15*b*).[2] In these fiery utterances

[1] The prophet is here alluding to the encroachments of Arab tribes against Edom, which had already become alarming in the time of Malachi (i. 3f.), and by the close of another century resulted in the total subjugation of the country. The Nabataeans are found occupying Petra, the capital of Edom, *c.* 312 B.C. (see Diodorus Siculus xix. 94).

[2] It has long been obvious that *v.* 16 opens a new vista, the coming of the apocalyptic 'day of Jahweh,' which has been heralded in *v.* 15*a*. But neither section is self-consistent. The closing verses 19–21 are rather a prosaic commentary on *v.* 18 than an actual part of the Apocalypse. The thorniest question, however, turns on the relation of *vv.* 1–14, 15*b* to Jer. xlix. 7–12. A comparison of these passages shows that Ob. 1–4 is practically identical with Jer. xlix. 14–16, that Ob. 5–7 is a comment on this oracle in partial dependence on Jer. xlix. 9ff., and that Ob. 8f. is a free echo of Jer. xlix. 7f. All possible views of the relation have been taken. As the purer text on the whole is preserved in Jer. xlix., it is most probable

we have unbared before us the heart of a patriotic Jew—a younger contemporary of Malachi and the prophet of hope—who rejoices in the discomfiture of Edom as an earnest of Jahweh's vengeance soon to be exacted to the full. But the genuine prophecy of Obadiah has been embellished by a piece of pure Apocalypse, dating from about the end of the century (*c.* 400 B.C.), which pictures all the nations of the earth reeling around Mount Zion, drunk with the bowl of confusion from Jahweh's hand, but Zion herself a sanctuary defended by Jahweh, and her people a flame to consume her enemies like stubble, Edom a desolation, and the scattered exiles of Israel once more in possession of Ephraim and Gilead, the Negeb of Judah and the Shephelah, the coasts of the Philistines and Phoenicians as far as Zarephath—Jahweh having at length assumed the Kingdom, and His saved ones ruling over their enemies (*vv.* 15*a*, 16–21).

These rude outlines are filled in with much beauty and vividness of colouring in the prophecy of Joel. The place which Joel occupies in the Canon led at first to his being classed among the earliest of the

that the common material belonged to an earlier oracle of doom on Edom, which has been woven into the texture of Jer. xlix., and also cited by Obadiah as an example of prophecy fulfilled. If the verses be secondary in Jeremiah, they find their most natural place in the early years of the Exile, when Israel felt so bitterly the treachery of Edom. Cf. J. A. Bewer's full discussion in the *Inter. Crit. Comm. on Obadiah and Joel*, pp. 3ff.

prophets, and referred even to the age of Rehoboam; but the literary mould of the prophecy, its clearly marked apocalyptic features, its general dependence on earlier books,[1] as well as the allusion to the rebuilt walls and Temple of Jerusalem, with the daily meal- and drink-offerings of the later ritual (i. 9), and the express mention of the Greeks as dealers in slaves (iii. 6), have brought scholars almost unanimously to the conclusion that the book is a genuine Apocalypse, somewhat later than Obadiah, reflecting another aspect of the Jewish hope during the legalistic period inaugurated by Ezra and Nehemiah. The immediate occasion was a terrible scourge of locusts, followed by a burning drought, which swept over the land of Judah, and brought the people to the brink of despair. In this devastation the prophet sees a premonition of the coming 'day of Jahweh,' and with breaking voice he calls for wailing and lamentation, the hallowing of fast-day and solemn convocation before Jahweh, lest utter destruction from the Almighty fall upon them, their cattle and their land.

Hear this, ye aged men,
Give ear, all inhabitants of the land!

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[1] On the literary parallels in Joel, affecting at least twenty out of seventy-two verses, cf. the careful studies of Driver, *Joel and Amos*, pp. 19ff., and G. B. Gray, *Expositor*, Sept. 1893, pp. 208ff.

Hath there been the like in your days,
Or in the days of your fathers?

Tell thereof to your children,
And your children to the generation thereafter:
That which the shearer hath left
The swarmer hath eaten,
And that which the swarmer hath left
The lapper hath eaten,
And that which the lapper hath left
The cropper hath eaten.[1]

Awake, ye drunkards, and weep—
Wail, all ye bibbers of wine![2]
For a folk hath invaded my land,
Powerful and numberless.
His teeth are the teeth of a lion,
And his fangs like those of a lioness.
He hath turned my vine to waste,
And my fig tree to splinters;
He hath stripped them bare, and flung down (het shreds)—
All white are their branches.

Mourn, ye priests,
The ministers of Jahweh![3]
Wail as a bride girt in sackcloth
For the spouse of her youth!
Cut off is libation and meal-offering
From the house of Jahweh:
The fields are blasted,
The ground lies mourning;
For the corn is blasted, the new wine abashed,
The oil pines away.

---

[1] The nouns are different descriptions of locusts significant of their destructive power.

[2] I have omitted the last clause of *v.* 5 as a prosaic explanation which mars the rhythmical movement of the piece.

[3] I have transferred *v.* 9*b* to the beginning of the strophe, reading the verb as imperative, in harmony with the rest of the poem.

Be abashed, ye ploughmen,
Wail, ye vine-dressers,
Because of the wheat and the barley,
For the harvest of the field is lost!
The vine is abashed,
And the fig tree droopeth:
Pomegranate, palm too, and apple,
All trees of the field are dried up:
And joy has gone abashed
From the sons of men.

Gird you (with mourning), and lament, ye priests—
Wail, ye ministers of the altar!
Come, lie down in sackcloth,
Ye ministers of our God![1]
Hallow a fast,
Summon assembly!
Gather all the inhabitants of the land
To the house of our God!
Cry unto Jahweh:
'Woe worth the Day!'
For near is the day of Jahweh,
As doom from the Doomster it cometh.[2]

Is not our food cut off
From our very eyes,
And gladness and joy
From the house of our God?
The garners lie waste,
The barns are broken:
Now that the corn is withered—
What shall we put in them?[3]

Aghast are the herds of cattle,
For no pasture have they;

---

[1] The final clause of *v.* 13 is an evident variant to *v.* 9*a*.

[2] I have attempted thus to reproduce the play between שֹׁד, *destruction*, and שַׁדַּי, *the Almighty*.

[3] The first clause of *v.* 17 is a corrupt variant to the following. On the remainder of the text cf. Kittel's note.

Even the flocks of sheep stand forlorn—
Unto Thee, Lord, they cry.[1]
For fire hath devoured
The pastures of the steppe-land,
And the flame hath scorched
All the trees of the field.
Yea, the beasts of the field
Do pant unto thee,
For the water-brooks are dry,
Their streams have failed[2] (i. 2–20).

Still nearer comes the terror, invading both city and home; and in verses now black and heavy with the burden of doom, then flashing into swift, impetuous movement like that of galloping steeds, the prophet implores his people to rend their hearts and turn unto Jahweh, if perchance He may yet relent and be gracious, and leave behind Him a blessing instead of judgment.

Blow trumpet in Zion,
Sound alarm in my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
For the day of Jahweh is come—
A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of cloud and murk.

Like dusk o'er the mountains is scattered
A people mighty and powerful;
Its like hath not been of old,
Nor shall be for ages hereafter.
Before them fire devoureth,
And behind them flame consumeth;

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[1] I have here read the 3rd pers. (as in *v.* 20) instead of the 1st.

[2] The closing words of *v.* 20 are falsely repeated from *v.* 19. In the translation I have suggested the probable thought of the clause displaced by their intrusion.

The land is like Eden before them,
And a desolate desert behind them.

* * * *

Yea, there is no escape from them.

Like horses they look,[1]
As war-steeds they run;
With a sound like (rattling) chariots
On the tops of mountains they leap —
As the crackle of flaming fire,
That devoureth the stubble.
They are like a powerful people,
Equipped for battle.
Before them nations are anguished,
All faces grow livid.

Like warriors they run,
Like soldiers they mount the wall;
They march every man on his track,
They tangle not their paths.
No one jostleth his comrade,
Each keepeth his own straight way;
Through the missiles they plunge
In ranks unbroken.
On to the city they rush,
Over the wall they course;
Into the houses they climb,
Through the windows they pass.

Before them trembleth the earth,
The heavens are shaken;
The sun and moon grow black,
The stars withdraw their shining.
And Jahweh doth utter His voice
Before His army;

[1] The resemblance of a locust's head to that of the horse has struck all observers, and finds expression in the German *Heupferd* and Italian *cavalletta*. On the accuracy of other elements in the description cf. especially G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, II. 398ff.

For very great is His host,
And mighty the workers of His word;
Yea, great is the day of Jahweh,
And very awful; who can endure it?

But even now, saith Jahweh,
Turn unto me with all your heart,
With fasting and weeping and mourning —
Rend your heart, and not your garment!
Yea, turn unto Jahweh your God,
For He is gracious and merciful,
Long-suffering and plenteous in love,
And relenteth of evil.
Who knoweth but He will turn and relent,
And leave behind Him a blessing—
Even meal-offering and libation
Unto Jahweh your God?

Blow trumpet in Zion,
Hallow the fast!
Summon assembly, gather the people,
Hallow the congregation!
Assemble the old men, gather the children,
Even the babes at the breast!
Let the bridegroom come out from his chamber,
And the bride from her bower!
Let the priests, the ministers of Jahweh,
Weep between porch and altar!
Let them say, O spare Thou
Thy people, O Lord!
And make not Thine heritage a reproach
For the nations to mock at!
Why should they say 'mong the peoples,
Where is their God? (ii. 1–17).

The prophet's appeal falls on open ears. The fast is hallowed, the congregation gathered, and their prayer uplifted. Jahweh hears and relents, and the promise is given of a glad new day. The 'north-

erner'[1] will be swept back to the desert, and the stricken land will blossom again with corn and wine and oil, and the sons of Zion will rejoice in Jahweh with abounding joy.

Fear not, O ground, exult and be glad!
For Jahweh hath done great things.
Fear not, ye beasts of the field!
For the desert pastures are verdant.
The trees bear their fruit,
The fig and the vine yield their riches.

Ye too, children of Zion, exult
And rejoice in Jahweh your God!
For he giveth you food in right measure,
And hath poured on you winter- and spring-rain as aforetime.
The threshing floors also shall be full of wheat,
And the vats shall o'erflow with new wine and oil.

And I will restore you the years that the swarmer hath eaten,
The lapper, the shearer and cropper,
Even my mighty host which I sent among you.
And ye shall eat your food, and be full,
And shall praise the name of Jahweh your God,
Who hath dealt so wondrously with you.
And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
And that I am Jahweh your God, and none else;
And nevermore shall my people be ashamed (*vv.* 21–27).

After these days Jahweh will pour out His Spirit upon all the flesh of Israel, and their sons and daughters shall prophesy, their old men shall dream dreams, and their young men shall see visions. But the nations that oppressed them shall be gathered into the valley of Jehoshaphat

[1] The name of 'northerner' is given to the locusts probably in allusion to the 'foe from the North' threatened in Jer. i. 14; Ezek. xxxviii. 6ff.

—*Jahweh judgeth*[1]—that their evil deeds may recoil upon their own heads. Amid storm and darkness Jahweh will ascend the judgment-seat, and send forth His voice like a lion. Then will His heavenly ministers put in the sickle among the multitudes in the Valley of Decision, and will garner till none is left, while Zion remains forever the abode of the Holy One.

Hallow a war, rouse the warriors;
Let all the fighting men gather and go!
Beat your ploughshares to swords,
And your pruning-hooks to spears!
Let the weakling say, I am strong,
And the coward become a hero![2]

Hasten and come, ye nations around,
Yea, gather ye all together!
Let the nations bestir them, and march
To the Vale of Jehoshaphat!
For there will I sit to judge
All the nations around.

Put in the sickle, for the vintage is ripe;
Go, tread,[3] *for the winepress is full!*
The vats overflow,
Because great is their wickedness.
There be multitudes, multitudes in the Vale of Decision,
For near is the day of Jahweh in the Vale of Decision.

The sun and moon grow black,
The stars have withdrawn their shining.

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[1] The valley of Jehoshaphat is probably the Kidron idealized and crowned by a new name suggestive of the judgment.

[2] The second *stichos* is got from the LXX reading in *v.* 11*b* (cf. Kittel).

[3] For רְדוּ, *go down*, read דְּרְכוּ, *tread* (LXX).

Jahweh roareth from Zion,
He sendeth His voice from Jerusalem;
And the heavens and earth do quake,

* * * *

But Jahweh will be a refuge to His people,
A stronghold to the children of Israel;
So shall ye know that I am Jahweh your God,
That dwelleth in Zion, my Holy Mountain.
Jerusalem also shall be holy,
And strangers shall pass through her no more.

And it shall be on that day—
That the mountains shall drip with sweet wine,
And the hills shall flow with milk;
All the wadis of Judah shall flow with water,
And a spring shall come from the house of Jahweh,
And shall water the valley of Shittim (*acacias*).

Egypt shall be a waste,
And Edom a desolate steppe,
For the wrong done the children of Judah;
But Judah shall be inhabited for ever,
And Jerusalem from age to age,
And Jahweh shall dwell in Zion (iii. 9–21).

These general features of judgment upon the nations and eternal redemption for Judah, which form the staple of all the apocalyptic writings, are repeated in the group of prophecies comprising the last six chapters of Zechariah, which are distinguished from the earlier part of the book by various well-marked signs. The atmosphere there was charged with peace and hope. The Temple was well-nigh completed, the curse removed, and Jerusalem sweetly portrayed as a cluster of villages without walls, nestling together in sunshine and brotherly

love, with none to make them afraid. In the closing chapters we move through scenes of terror and war and bloodshed. 'The fantasy of the writer positively wades in the blood of the Gentiles.'[1] Only after they have been wiped out or reduced to a miserable remnant by sword and fire and plague will the wrath of Jahweh be assuaged and His people dwell in peace among their neighbours. For His holiness is a devouring flame that can leave no heathen impurity behind it.[2]

The Apocalypse opens amid the glare and tumult of the conflagration, as it sweeps upon the nations that oppressed Israel—the people of Damascus and Hamath, Tyre and Sidon, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and Ashdod. Their bulwarks are burnt, their ramparts dashed in the sea, their proud dwellings given over to bastard races, and their borders merged in the wide domain of Israel. But

[1] Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel* (*E.T.*), p. 167.

[2] The prophecies fall into four distinct groups: (*a*) the promise of the Messianic Kingdom and the restoration of Israel (ix. 1–xi. 3); (*b*) the allegory of the shepherds (xi. 4–17; xiii. 7–9); (*c*) an apocalypse of the deliverance and purification of Jerusalem (xii. 1–xiii. 6); and (*d*) the elevation of Jerusalem as the centre of holiness to the world (xiv. 1–21). These various sections have been assigned to different authors and different dates from the early Greek period (300–280 B.C.) to the time of conflict under the Seleucids (*c.* 160). Our knowledge of contemporary history is too vague to warrant a definite decision; we must therefore be content to describe the chapters as a collection of apocalyptic pieces reflecting the Jewish faith and hope in its deadly struggle with Hellenism.

high above the roaring of the flames and the clash of arms are heard songs of joy and praise from Jerusalem; for her King doth come to her—the victorious Prince of Peace that earlier prophets had seen afar off—lowly and riding upon an ass, to speak peace unto the nations, and to rule them from sea to sea (the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean) and from the River (the Euphrates) to the furthest ends of the earth (ix. 1–10). As for the exiles in distant Babylonia—those 'prisoners of hope' still languishing in pit and dungeon—Jahweh has even now spoken the word of release, and all that are bound by 'the blood of the covenant' will return to Zion, and enjoy the double of what they have lost. Already He has bent Him Judah as a sure, strong bow, and filled the bow with Ephraim, a swift and deadly arrow, and has taken to Him the sons of Zion as the sword of a doughty warrior, and will sweep upon their enemies with whirlwinds from the South, sending forth His shafts as lightning, and sounding loud blasts from His trumpet. Under His protecting wings the sons of Zion will trample down their enemies, and drink their blood like wine, till they are filled with it as a bowl, and saturated even as the corners of an altar. Thus Jahweh will save His people, and tend them like a flock, and they shall be as 'stones for a crown' glittering upon His sacred soil (*vv.* 11–17).

In the immediate sequel Israel is depicted as a

poor and afflicted remnant led astray by false teachers and shepherds—prophets who divined for gain and heathen princes who made havoc of the flock—so that they wandered at large like sheep having no shepherd. Jahweh has long been silent, but now His wrath is kindled against the shepherds and 'bell-wethers' who misled His people, and He will visit them with swift punishment for their cruelty and greed. On that day He will make His sheep like 'lusty war-steeds,' and they shall trample down armed men 'like mire of the streets,' while the riders on horses are confounded. With His own might shall He strengthen the house of Judah, and shall save also their lost brethren, the house of Joseph, and they shall be as though He had not cast them off. Yea, the men of Ephraim shall uprise like heroes, their heart expanded as with wine, and they shall return from all the lands where they were scattered, while the pride of their enemies is humbled, and they wail as oaks of Bashan when the forest is fallen, and roar as young lions when the jungle of Jordan is laid waste (x. 1.–xi. 3).

The familiar figure of the flock receives a rich expansion in the allegory of the shepherds, where the prophet himself personates the rulers of his people. Israel is a flock of helpless sheep, bought and sold by heathen 'owners,' to be fed for the slaughter. So long as they gain wealth from their

trafficking, these owners care nothing for the sheep. Their own shepherds—the priests of Israel—are as indifferent to their welfare, thinking only of the wages they receive. At Jahweh's personal command the prophet assumes the care of the sheep. Taking to him two staves—*Grace* (or *Favour*) and *Bonds* (or *Unity*)—symbolical of the favour which he won his flock among the nations and his earnest efforts to preserve their unity—he tends them as a good shepherd, who spares no pains to help the poor and the weak, and to shelter the young ones. But the flock soon weary of the shepherd, and in despair he resigns his charge, breaking the two staves Favour and Unity—thus leaving the flock scattered and friendless in the world—and receiving for his services the slave's pittance of thirty pieces of silver, which he forthwith casts into the Temple treasury. Next playing the part of a worthless shepherd, he allows the flock to perish with hunger and disease, seeking only to eat for himself 'the flesh of the fattest,' and to gnaw the legs of the sound ones (xi. 4–17). Jahweh raises his sword against the faithless shepherd; he is smitten, and the sheep are scattered to the winds. Two parts are cut off—even the lambs sharing the fate of their flocks—but Jahweh reserves Him the third part, passes it through the furnace of affliction, and brings it forth like silver or gold refined in the crucible. 'They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them; I will say, They are my people,

and they shall say, Jahweh is my God' (xiii. 7–9).[1]

In the following section we pass once more to apocalypse, and see Jerusalem as 'a cup of reeling' to all the peoples round about, or as 'a heavy boulder' which gashes all who try to lift it. Horse and rider are alike smitten with madness, and the chieftains of Judah are made like a pan of fire among wood, or a flaming torch among sheaves, devouring on the right hand and on the left, till Jerusalem is freed from all her enemies. A new spirit is now poured upon the house of David and the dwellers in Jerusalem—a spirit of grace and prayer—so that they mourn for Him they have unjustly pierced, and are in bitterness of soul for Him as they would be for a first-born son.[2] A fountain is likewise opened in Jerusalem—a fountain 'for sin and for uncleanness'—and the very names of the false gods are forgotten, while the prophets and every 'spirit of uncleanness'—all the

[1] The allegory of the shepherds is doubtless based on historical personalities and events, though our general ignorance of the period in question prevents our recognizing them with any degree of certainty. The three shepherds cut off in one month (*v.* 8*a*) are most easily identified with the high-priests Lysimachus, Jason and Menelaus, who all met violent deaths between the years 171 and 163; but this may be a later intrusion, *v.* 7 finding its true sequel in 8*b*.

[2] If the Apocalypse belong to the Seleucid period the martyr is probably the high-priest Onias III, who was murdered by the Jews in 171 B.C. Jewish interpreters identify him with the Servant of Jahweh, now regarded as an individual sufferer.

influences that make for uncleanness—are cut off from the land. In that day the father and mother of a prophet will thrust him through with their own hands, while he vainly protests that he is no prophet but a tiller of the soil, and that the tattoo marks on his breast are the scars of wounds wherewith he was wounded in the house of his friends (xii. 1–xiii. 6).

The theme of the closing section is similar. Jerusalem has been stormed and spoiled, and half of the city is carried into captivity. But Jahweh comes down with all His holy angels to fight for His people. Taking His stand on the Mount of Olives, He cleaves it in two by a mighty earthquake, one half of the mountain sliding Northward, and the other South, leaving a chasm for the fugitives to escape. Their enemies destroyed, the people of Jerusalem dwell in abiding peace and joy. 'It shall be on that day, that there shall be neither cold nor frost nor snow; but there shall be endless day—the day well known to Jahweh—not day and night, but at evening time there shall be light. And it shall be on that day, that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, one half toward the Eastern sea, and one half toward the Western sea; both summer and winter shall they flow. And Jahweh shall be King over all the earth; on that day Jahweh shall be one, and His name one. And the whole land shall be turned to a steppe, from Geba to

Rimmon (En-rimmon), South of Jerusalem ; only she (Jerusalem) shall stand aloft, and shall abide in her place—even from the gate of Benjamin to the site of the old gate (the corner-gate) and from the tower of Hananel to the king's wine-presses shall she be inhabited. And there shall be no more curse, but Jerusalem shall dwell in safety,' while her enemies are devastated by plague. 'He will make their flesh moulder, even as they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall moulder in their sockets, and their tongues shall moulder in their mouth.' Their horses and cattle also shall perish of the plague. 'And it shall be, that every one that is left of all the nations which went against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to do obeisance to the King, even Jahweh of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. . . . On that day there shall be (inscribed) upon the bells of the horses, *Holy unto Jahweh* ; and the (common) pots in the house of Jahweh shall be (used) as the basins before the altar'—so abundant shall be the sacrifices in the Temple—'yea, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy unto Jahweh of hosts ; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and shall cook (their sacrifices) therein, while no trafficker shall any more be found in the house of Jahweh of hosts' (xiv. 1–21).

Far loftier heights are touched in the soaring visions of Isaiah xxiv.–xxvii. The apocalyptic

character of these chapters is evident: language, style and atmosphere alike connect them with Joel and the second part of Zechariah. But they are marked by a breadth of outlook, a tenderness and sympathy, unknown to these hot spirits. In these respects they can hardly be surpassed in the Old Testament.[1]

The curtain rises on the usual apocalyptic spectacle of the world turned upside down before the righteous judgment of Jahweh.

Behold! Jahweh doth empty the earth, and waste it;
He turneth it upside down, and scattereth its inhabitants (xxiv. 1).

Ruin falls equally on people and priest, master and servant, mistress and maid, buyer and seller, taker and giver of interest, heaven and earth, and the fruits of the ground; for the whole world is profaned by the crimes of its inhabitants.

A curse devoureth the earth,
And the dwellers therein pay their guilt;
Thus the inhabitants of the earth are minished,
And of mortals there are left but few.
The new wine mourneth, the vine doth languish,
All the joyous of heart do sigh.
The mirth of timbrels hath ceased,
The din of the joyful is still.
With song shall they no more drink wine,
(For) bitter is mead to the drinkers thereof.

[1] To this cycle of oracles also various dates have been assigned, from the whirlwind campaigns of Alexander the Great to the age of Johannes Hyrcanus (*c.* 128–111 B.C.). Precise indications are wanting; the interpolated songs, however, are clearly later than the Apocalypse proper.

The city of Chaos is shattered,
Every house is shut up, that no one may enter ;
In the streets is outcry for (lack of) wine,
All joy is grown dim, the mirth of the land is gone.
Desolation is left in the city,
To ruins the gate is battered.
For thus shall it be in the midst of the earth,
Among all the peoples—
As when olive trees are beaten,
Or at gleaning, when vintage is over (xxiv. 6–13).

From the distant places of the earth, both East and West, there rise loud songs of praise to Jahweh, proclaiming the dawn of salvation ; but meanwhile all around is darkness and distress.

Terror and pit and snare
Be upon you, dwellers on earth !
And he that fleeth from terror shall fall on the pit,
And he that escapes from the pit shall be caught in the snare.
For the windows above are opened,
And the roots of the earth do shake ;
The earth is utterly broken,
Is split to the heart, and tossed.
The earth doth reel as a drunkard,
And is swayed to and fro like a hut.
The transgression of earth lies heavy thereon ;
So it falleth, to rise no more (*vv.* 17–20).

But not only on the kings and princes of earth does the judgment fall ; ' the host of the height on high ' —the rebellious powers of heaven—are likewise gathered together, ' as prisoners are gathered in the dungeon,' to be visited with condign punishment on the day when the sun and moon stand abashed before the radiance of Jahweh's glory, and He stands as King on Mount Zion, and shows forth His praise to the elders. Then shall

the veil be removed from the face of all nations, and they shall sit down with Jahweh at His coronation feast, and shall enjoy the bliss of His presence for ever.

Then Jahweh of hosts will make for all peoples
A feast of fat things, of wine on the lees,
Fat things full of marrow, wine on lees well refined.
Then will He rend on this mountain
The veil that veileth all peoples,
And the web that is woven upon all nations.
He hath swallowed up death for ever,
And will wipe the tears from all faces,
And the reproach of His people remove from the earth.
For Jahweh hath spoken (xxv. 6–8).

A significant new *motif* is here introduced into Apocalypse, one that was destined to play a large part in future visions of the Kingdom, and to contribute a powerful element to the faith of Judaism. Even in the purest of the Psalms the good man's outlook was bounded by this life. Only a few greatly daring spirits, driven to despair by the insoluble problems of moral life, had sought refuge in the hereafter, or fiercely protested against the indignity of death for those whose lives were hid in God.[1] No doubt their heroism of faith had its influence on the thoughtful. But it was the taking up of their hope into the enchanted region of Apocalypse that captivated the heart and imagination of the people, and gave to the doctrine of immortality the sure place it held in Jewish belief by the time of our Lord.

[1] Cf. the chapter on 'Life and Immortality' in the author's *Poets of the Old Testament*, pp. 167ff.

Intermingled with the Apocalypse are outbursts of melody (xxv. 1–5 ; xxvi. 1–19 ; xxvii. 2–6 ; and xxvii. 7–11) which endear the chapters even to those blind to their true character and purpose. Of these lyrical intermezzos the Song of Salvation is a real classic of devotion.

A strong city is ours ;
For protection He setteth
Both walls and bulwark.

Open the gates,
That the righteous may enter,
Who keepeth troth !

The steadfast mind
Thou keepest in peace,
For He trusteth in Thee.

Trust Jahweh for ever !
For Jahweh the Lord
Is a Rock everlasting (xxvi. 1–4).

The path of the upright is even,
The track of the just man Thou smoothest.
In the path of Thy judgments, O Lord, have we sought Thee ;
Thy name and memorial are our soul's desire.

With my soul have I desired Thee in the night,
Yea, with my spirit do I seek Thee earnestly ;
For when Thy judgments reach down to the earth,
The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (*vv.* 7–9).

Jahweh, Thy hand is exalted,
But Thine enemies see it not ;
Now let them see Thy zeal for Thy people,
Yea, let fire consume them !

But for us, Lord, ordain Thou peace !
For even all our work hast Thou wrought for us.
There have ruled us lords beside Thee, O Lord ;
But Thee alone do we mention by name (*vv.* 11–13).

In distress, Lord, we sought Thee,
We cried through oppression,
When Thy chastening was on us.

As a woman with child,
Who is near to give birth,
And cries out in her pain;

So were we, Lord, before Thee—
We travailed and writhed,
And gave birth to wind!

For the land we wrought no deliverance,
The dwellers on earth fell not (were not born);
But Thy dead shall live,
Their bodies shall rise.

They that dwell in the dust
Shall awake and sing out;
For Thy dew is the dew of lights,
And the earth shall bring shades (the dead) to birth (*vv.* 16–19).

On much the same note is pitched the sweet Vineyard-song, whose quick two-pulsed measures likewise rise to threes in the closing lines of calm assurance.

A delightsome vineyard;
Sing it a song!

I Jahweh do keep it,
Each moment I water it;
Night and day I keep it,
Lest its leafage be missing.

If one would but face me
With thistles and thorns,
In war would I march on them,
I would burn them together.

Else let him cling to my stronghold,
And make his peace with me,
Yea, make his peace with me!

On that day shall Jacob take root,
Israel shall blossom and bud,
And shall fill the world with fruit (xxvii. 2–6).

CHAPTER XXIV

Daniel the Seer

THUS far the development of Apocalypse has been halting and tentative, but in the book of Daniel it reaches the full strength of manhood. The hero of the book is a Jewish exile, one of those true-hearted sons of Zion who not merely kept their own souls free from pollution through the dark days of their country's shame, but stood like a rock amid the swirling waters, the centre of security for all who sought to remain loyal to their faith. The early chapters tell of his inflexible devotion to the God of his fathers in the face of fierce temptations. As the result he rises to the foremost position of authority under successive rulers of Babylon ; and in a series of visions, mainly occupying the latter half of the book, he uplifts the eyes of his downcast fellow-patriots to contemplate the issues of years to come.

Though the scene is laid in the Exile, the book itself is centuries later. One whole section is written in Aramaic, specifically the Western dialect found in Ezra and the Targums of Jonathan and Onkelos. Even the Hebrew portions are unmis-

takably decadent, the style being laboured and stilted, full of mannerisms, and strongly tinctured with Aramaic idioms. The linguistic peculiarities of these chapters suggest an Aramaic origin for the whole book; in any case the writer was more familiar with the newer dialect than with the classical Hebrew of Samuel and Kings. His language reveals also a heavy colouring of Persian forms, implying a date subsequent to the victories of Cyrus; and at feast four examples of purely Greek words, one of these in the Macedonian dialect,[1] presupposing the extension of Greek influence over Palestine and the East, as the result of the conquests of Alexander the Great. The historical purview of Daniel points even to an advanced stage of Greek domination. The knowledge displayed of the Babylonian Exile and the Medo-Persian Empire is vague and confused, while as we proceed along the pathway of Greek civilization the light becomes fuller and stronger, until it reaches its zenith in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, who in 168 B.C. assailed Jerusalem, threw down the city walls, dismantled the Temple, and on the site of the great altar of burnt-offering erected an altar to Zeus, on which he offered sacrifices of swine, commanding the inhabitants of every village in Palestine to follow his example, as well as to refrain from Sabbath

[1] קַרְנָא (iii. 4) = *κήρυξ*; פְּסַנְתֵּרִין, קִיתָרוֹס and סוּמְפֹּנְיָה (iii. 5ff.) = *κιθαρίς*, *ψαντήριον* (Macedonian form of *ψαλτήριον*), and *συμφωνία*.

observance and the rite of circumcision. On this crowning act of sacrilege the plot of the Apocalypse hinges. The date clearly lies between 167 and 165 —after the desecration of the Temple on Dec. 15, 168 and the first astonishing victories of Judas Maccabeus in the following year, but before the Maccabean rule had been firmly established, or the Temple purified (Dec. 25, 165). The purpose of the book is to rouse the energies of the Jews to combat the peril that faced them, partly by concrete examples of how brave men of old held fast to duty and honour, refusing alike to worship the images of their heathen over-lords and to defile themselves by their ways, and partly by forecasts of a brighter age, when the Kingdom of the most High should rise in triumph over all the Empires of the earth, and His faithful people should reign with Him for ever.[1]

In the first of these visions—that embodied in Nebuchadnezzar's[2] dream (ch. ii.)—we have the general succession of world-dynasties passed in review: the head of fine gold symbolizing the brilliant Empire of Nebuchadnezzar himself; while the breast and arms of silver represent Cyrus' young

[1] For a more detailed exposition of these arguments, cf. the standard Introductions and Commentaries, *e.g.*, Driver in the *Cambridge Bible*, or R. H. Charles in the *Century Bible*.

[2] Thus the name of the Babylonian king appears—less correctly—in Daniel, as in 2 Kings xxiv. 1ff. and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6ff.

martial kingdom; the thighs of brass, the powerful monarchy of Darius the Persian, heir to the passing Median rule; and the legs and feet of iron, mingled with potter's clay, the ruthless Greek power of Alexander, already broken into warring elements, that must soon bring it down in ruins. Confronting all these earthly monarchies the prophet sees the Rock Kingdom of the living God, from which is cut by unseen hands a stone—His own corner-stone Israel—that smites the image, and destroys it utterly, but itself shall stand for ever, filling the earth with its invincible might. Essentially the same panorama of history is unrolled in Daniel's vision (ch. vii.): the lion with eagle's wings representing the lordly Babylonian Empire, which culminated in the human-hearted reign of Nebuchadnezzar; the ravenous bear with the three ribs between its teeth (the symbol of destruction), the Median kingdom which overthrew it; the leopard with four heads and four bird-like wings, the Empire of Darius, extending its sway over the four quarters of the earth; and the terrible beast with great iron teeth and ten powerful horns, which trampled the rest of the nations under its feet, devouring and breaking in pieces, the conquering Greek power, with its ten kings from Alexander to Demetrius I (Soter)—the little horn which sprung from the midst of the others, with its eyes bright and keen, 'like the eyes of a man,'

and its mouth speaking blasphemies, the evident emblem of Antiochus Epiphanes, who wrought such havoc on the people of God, and dared even to challenge His supremacy. Here also the kingdoms of the world are brought before the judgment-seat of God, visualized as 'the ancient of days'—the very ideal of grave old manhood—His head hoary as wool and His garment like snow, 'His throne fiery flames and its wheels burning fire,' thousand thousands ministering unto Him and ten thousand times ten thousand gathered before Him for judgment. The little horn which had blasphemed God and waged war against His saints is slain, and its body given to the flames; the other beasts are stripped of their dominion, though their lives are prolonged for a season. As the seer continues to look, behold! there comes with the clouds of heaven 'one like unto a son of man'—a just and gracious human monarchy—which shall have dominion over all other powers, and shall neither pass away nor be destroyed like them. This kingdom is explicitly identified with 'the people of the saints of the Most High' (*v.* 27)—the true community of Israel, which receives the inheritance of the nations from its Lord—a personification similar to that of the Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah, which for the prophet himself embraced Israel as an ideal whole, though in Jewish Apo-

calypse it was narrowed down to the Messiah, and found its fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

The veil is lifted a little further in a vision dated the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar (ch. viii.), where the united Medo-Persian Empire appears as a ram with two horns, one higher than the other and somewhat later in appearing, while the victorious kingdom of Greece is represented by a he-goat that came from the West, so swiftly that he seemed not to touch the ground beneath his feet and was moved with fury against the ram, and smote him, and brake both his horns, and magnified himself exceedingly, and overran the whole face of the earth. The he-goat is pictured with a 'notable' or conspicuous horn between his eyes, identified with the first king of Greece, Alexander the Great (*v.* 21); and when this horn is broken—by the death of Alexander in 323 B.C.—there rise in its place four other horns, facing the four winds of heaven, *i.e.* the four petty kingdoms into which Alexander's Empire was divided—Egypt under the rule of the Ptolemies in the South, the Seleucid kingdom of Syria and Babylonia in the East, Asia Minor in the North, and Greece itself in the West. From one of these (the dynasty of the Seleucids) comes a little horn (Antiochus), which waxes exceeding great, and extends its might both South and East, even to 'the glorious land' (Palestine), casting down 'the place of the sanctuary

(the Temple), and removing the continual burnt-offering from the altar, polluting the sacred site with 'the desolating sin' of heathenism (the altar of Zeus on which swine were offered in sacrifice), and trampling truth and righteousness underfoot, until the times shall be fulfilled, and the Most High set limits to his rage. In a further vision (ch. ix.) it is revealed to Daniel that the times appointed—the 1,150 days of the oppressor's reign—will complete the 70 'weeks of years' foreseen by Jeremiah as the period of discipline for Israel, from the destruction of Jerusalem till God shall 'finish transgression and make an end of sin, purge away iniquity and set up everlasting righteousness, seal vision and prophet' (*i.e.* confirm the truth of prophetic visions) 'and anoint (dedicate afresh) the most holy place' (*v.* 24). Then in an ecstasy he is swept up to heaven, and sees the warfare of contending nations fought out by their patron angels above (chs. x.–xii.). Through the help of Michael, the 'prince' or patron of Israel, the kingdom of Persia is crushed; on its ruins Alexander of Greece rises to great power, but no sooner has he consolidated his strength than he is cut down, and his Empire broken into four. Internecine conflicts devastate these kingdoms,[1] until 'a contemptible person' (Antiochus) usurps the sceptre of the East, over-

[1] On the intricate historical relations envisaged in xi. 4ff., cf. Charles, *op. cit.*, pp. 119ff.

throws 'the king of the South' (Ptolemy Philometor), and then carries his arms into 'the glorious land,' where he profanes the sanctuary, removes the continual burnt-offering, and sets up 'the abomination that maketh desolate,' regardless alike of 'the god of his fathers' and of all other gods. But the consummation is decreed; and in the very flush of a mad campaign against the king of Egypt he comes to a miserable end within the borders of Palestine, 'between the Sea (the Mediterranean) and the glorious holy mountain (Zion).'[1] Immediately there falls upon Israel the final conflict with evil. Jerusalem is assailed by heathen powers on every side, and the saints must endure 'a time of trouble such as never has been since there was a nation even to that same time.' But Michael stands up to help them, and Israel is delivered, even 'every one whose name is found written in the book' of life. In return for their patient endurance, the righteous are made partakers of immortal life; and those who have died in faith rise to share their bliss. 'Many of them that sleep in the land of dust (Sheol) shall awake, some to everlasting life, and others (the notoriously

[1] In xi. 40ff. veiled history melts into prediction, and an imaginative picture is drawn of Antiochus' last ambitious designs and death. While in harmony with the schematism of Apocalypse, the picture is at variance with historical fact, Antiochus meeting his fate at Tabae, in Persia, 164 B.C.

wicked) to shame and everlasting contempt.' As for the 'wise' or good, who have turned many to righteousness, 'they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, . . . even as the stars for ever and ever' (xii. 2f.).[1]

[1] The resurrection of the dead is not yet regarded as normal or universal. Only the pre-eminently righteous and wicked are raised to life, the former to glory and the latter to shame, while the Laodiceans, who are conspicuous neither for good nor for evil, are left in the limbo of Sheol. 'This is almost exactly what we find in I Enoch xxii., where, however, the idea of Sheol is in a higher state of development than that in our text' (Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 140).

CHAPTER XXV

Jonah the Missionary

THE alluring visions of apocalyptic seers helped powerfully to strengthen the heart of Israel during these troublous centuries. There was, however, a grave danger in Apocalypse, and the Jews did not wholly escape it. By dwelling on the glorious future that awaited themselves, they tended to forget their missionary obligations, and even allowed their minds to brood with malicious delight upon the sufferings to which their enemies were doomed. The Apocalypses of the Old Testament are not free from this spirit, and as we pass beyond the pale of Scripture it becomes greatly accentuated. But other voices were raised to bring the people to worthier thoughts of their own destiny and the salvation of the world. Thus Malachi exalts the heathen nations as more loyal to God's honour than His own peculiar people, while the nameless author of Isa. xix. 23ff. pictures Israel as a third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth. The purest essence of Jewish liberalism is found, however, in the

nobly conceived little book of Jonah, perhaps the most Christlike portion of the Old Testament.

The book of Jonah is not strictly prophetic. It contains no word either of duty or of cheer from Jahweh, but tells the story of a prophet's wilfulness, restoration and despondency, in much the same style as the Elijah section of Kings. The hero of the book is Jonah, son of Amittai, an older contemporary of Amos and Hosea, who flourished in the reign of Jeroboam II, and predicted that king's victories over Syria (cf. 2 Kings xiv. 25). In the first chapter we read how the prophet was bidden journey to Nineveh and testify against its wickedness, but, fearing lest the people might repent and Jahweh forgive them, took ship at Joppa, and attempted to escape to Tarshish, on the far-distant coast of Spain; how a great storm arose, which imperilled the lives of all on board, until Jonah was cast out as a sacrifice to the deep; and how Jahweh prepared for Jonah a great fish, in whose belly he remained for three days and nights. The second chapter tells how Jonah prayed,[1] and on the third day was vomited out on dry land. The sequel appears in the two closing chapters. A second time the word of Jahweh came to Jonah,

[1] The so-called 'prayer of Jonah' (ii. 2–9) is really a Hymn of Thanksgiving for some unlooked-for deliverance from death and Sheol, in the style of the later Psalmists, but with no essential bearing on Jonah's experience.

and he obeyed, arose and went to Nineveh, proclaimed the total destruction of the city within forty days, and thereafter built a booth on the East side of the city, and sat down in the shadow, 'till he might see what would become of the city.'[1] But the issue proved contrary to his expectations. The people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and clothed themselves with sackcloth, 'from the greatest of them even to the least of them.' And God saw their works, 'and God repented of the evil which He said He would do unto them; and He did it not.' But Jonah was sorely displeased, and in bitter spleen and jealousy for his honour prayed God to take away his life, for it was better to die than to live humiliated. Then through the sympathy which He evoked for a gourd swiftly raised over Jonah's head, and as swiftly stricken and blighted by worm and wind, God sought to instil into his embittered heart some touch at least of His own sympathy for His creatures. 'Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not laboured, and which thou madest not grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than six-score thousand persons that

[1] The isolated verse iv. 5 finds its most natural position after iii. 4.

cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and also much cattle?' (iv. 10f.).

It is unfortunate that literary and historical questions have rendered so many insensible to the true spirit and purpose of Jonah. Conflict has raged around the outward details of the storm and its ceasing, the journey to Nineveh and the sudden conversion of the people, the springing up and destruction of the gourd, but especially the episode of 'Jonah's whale,' which has become a standard joke of the sceptic. The purpose of criticism is to lead us beyond the externals to a just appreciation of the nature, object and significance of the book. And one result emerges at the outset—that we are not in presence of contemporary history. The prophet himself lived in the early part of Jeroboam's reign (*c.* 775 B.C.); but, from whatever source the author drew his materials, the book of Jonah belongs to the same period as the apocalyptic literature we have been studying, probably the middle or end of the third century. In spite of its dependence on classical models, such as Kings and Deuteronomy, the language is almost as decadent as that of Daniel, while the movement of events is forced and jerky, quite unlike the even flow of the older historians. We cannot, therefore, lay much stress on the historical value of Jonah. The book is really an early example of the Midrash—moral apologue or

parable—which was so much used by Jewish teachers, and notably by our Lord, to illustrate or enforce spiritual truth. As literature, it stands in exactly the same category as the parables of the sower and the prodigal son. Jonah is the typical Israelite of his day, jealous of his spiritual prerogatives, and eager for the annihilation of the heathen nations rather than their reception into the Kingdom, who has to pass through tribulation, suffering, and the 'pains and sorrows' of death itself,[1] before he will take up his missionary vocation with heart or enthusiasm. The object of the book is to bring the people to a better mind: to make them realize their responsibilities to the world lying around them in darkness, and to inspire them with something of God's passion for humanity. He is the Lord and Saviour, not of Israel alone, but of all men and nations. His ears are ever open to the prayer of sincerity—whether of Spanish sailors crying to their gods for help in time of need, or of the multitudes of Nineveh turning to Him in response to His prophet's warning—while His heart flows out in sympathy to the weak and helpless, the little children, and even the cattle, doomed to

[1] The imprisonment in the 'great fish' is probably an allegorical suggestion of the Exile, through which Israel was brought to itself, and returned to the Father. The story of the fish belongs to a wide-spread cycle of myth, which assumes many different forms in different lands. Cf. J. A. Bewer, *Int. Crit. Comm. on Jonah*, with literature there cited.

die for no wrong-doing of their own. And they are God's true people who have most of His heart of love: who take upon themselves the sorrows of the world, and in love go forth to seek and save the lost. One can readily understand how the book appealed to the imagination of Jesus Christ, how He pored over its gracious message, and found in Jonah a 'sign' of His own ministry. On ourselves it is calculated to impress anew the breadth of God's revealing purpose, no less than the fulness of His mercy. God unveils Himself in many ways, by poetry and prophecy, by law and sacrifice, by simple goodness and purity of life, and equally by symbol and parable; for His revelation is through human channels, and nothing human is alien to His spirit.

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